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Number 64

October 1989

Manhunter 2: San Francisco • Universe III

# COMPUTER GAMING WORLD



EA's John Madden Football

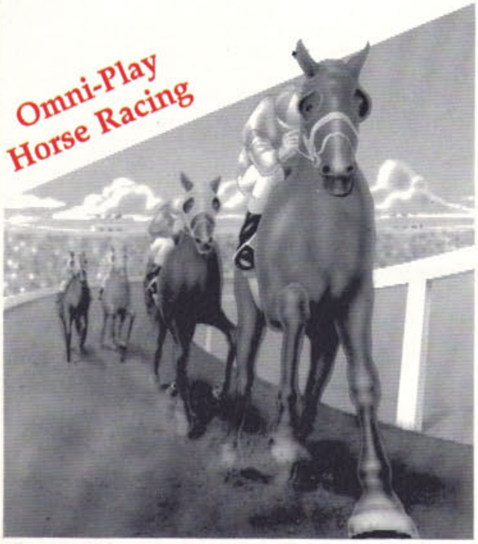
## Special Football Issue

- Playmaker Football
- Pure-Stat Football
- TV Sports Football
- MSFL Football
- Grave Yardage

# COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

**Covering the World of Computer Games For Eight Years**

**October 1989** **Number 64**




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**Page 60**

## Features



## Departments



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# The "Contest" Contest



*Bowing to consumer demand, CGW announces its monthly contest department. You have told us that you like contests and want to see more, so more is what you will get (as they say, be careful what you ask for . . .).*

*Since we know we have the most intelligent readers in the hobby we have decided to pick your brains (it's cheaper than hiring a consultant). We want you to help us put together some fun filled contests. The best ones will be used in the magazine (with full credit to the author). The reader that submits the best contest idea will, in addition to being made forever famous by having his/her winning contest entry published, receive a three year subscription or renewal to CGW. Any contest which appears in CGW will be copyrighted by Golden Empire Publications.*

*Put on your thinking caps and give us some good ideas. Multiple choice? Essay? Brain Teasers? Whatever! The only guideline is that the contest must deal with the subject of computer games.*

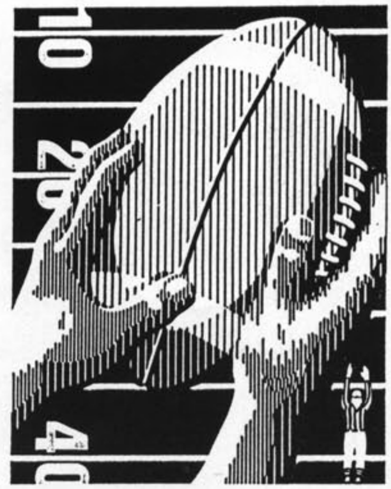
*Submit your contest ideas to:*

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Anaheim, CA 92803-4566.

*Entries must be mailed no later than November 30, 1989.*



# Kicking Off The Fall Season



**The State of the Industry**: At the Spring Symposium of the Software Publishers Association, a software retailer opened his discussion about software marketing by stating, "The shelf space wars are over and the software industry has won the victory." From CGW's perspective, "It ain't necessarily so!" Shelf space is currently at such a premium that it is affecting the release schedules of new products. Software publishers are finding sales resistance to new conversions of older products. Last year's successful Apple II game may not be greeted with enthusiasm as this year's new Amiga game and some retailers may opt not to stock it.

Therefore, the coming trend is toward horizontal releases (i.e. as many formats as possible released at the same time). **Origin, Inc.** finished the first versions of their Fall releases months ago, but has resisted the temptation to market the line one format at a time. **Lucasfilm Games** plans a worldwide release of *Loom* in three different formats during the first part of 1990. Other publishers are expected to follow suit.

The bad news for CGW readers is that they may have to wait longer to see some of the breakthrough games that have been under development over the last year or so. The good news is that more people will be able to participate in the initial excitement of the new products and our reviews will be able to touch base with more formats at the same time (at least, we'll be able to note basic differences in sound, graphics, and interface).

**The State of the Magazine:** The summer issues of CGW also reflect the current state of the industry. The last three "Taking A Peek" columns contained less new titles than at any time in recent memory and we find ourselves waiting as anxiously as you are for that flurry of Fall and Christmas releases. The current bulked-up issue suggests that a rebound from the summer "game recession" is on its way.

The professional football season is just under way, so this issue presents a look at familiar titles in new formats (*John Madden Football, TV Sports Football, MSFL Football* and *Pure Stat Football*), as well as *ABC Monday Night Football, Playmaker Football*, and a strange version of monster football called *Grave Yardage*. As a bonus for sports simulation fans, we take a look at *Omni-Play™ Horse Racing*.

That's the theme of the issue, but we haven't forgotten the adventure game fans. This issue, we look at *Manhunter 2: San Francisco, Project Firestart,* and *Universe 3*. Adventure fans will also want to pay close attention to this month's "Rumor Bag" for details about future **Sierra** releases.

Wargamers may feel shortchanged with only *Vulcan* and *Risk* to consider, but next month will be different. We'll look at *Decisive Battles of the ACW: Volume 2* (the MS-DOS version) and *F-15 Strike Eagle II*. In the meantime, you might want to try out your strategic options in *QIX*, a real-time abstract strategy game.

*Correction: The phone number for Computer Sports Network is 800-727-4636.*

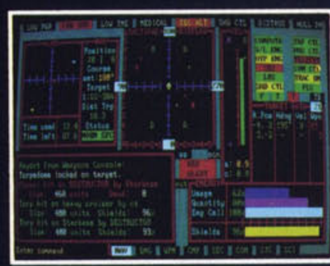
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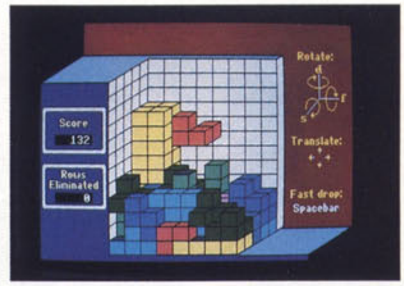
**HARRIER 7**: Terrorists are at it again, capturing seven oil platforms and closing off the Gulf from any oil shipping. Players can either get in line at the gas station now, or jump in their VTOL BA Harrier attack fighter and do something about it! Maneuvering the fighter from third person perspective, players battle enemy fighters and ships to free the oil platforms from the terrorists, and U.S. civilians from the terrors of odd/even gas rationing. IBM (pictured) & C-64 ($14.95). Circle reader service #1.

**MENTAL BLOCKS**: This collection of four spatially-oriented games will give you a good right-brain workout. The games include both a 2-D and a 3-D block stacking challenge, a la *Tetris*, a "fold the box" mind puzzle, and a geometric sequence puzzle of the likes found on standard IQ tests. Spatial illiterates need not apply for these mental aerobics. IBM (pictured) & C-64 ($14.94). Circle reader service #2.

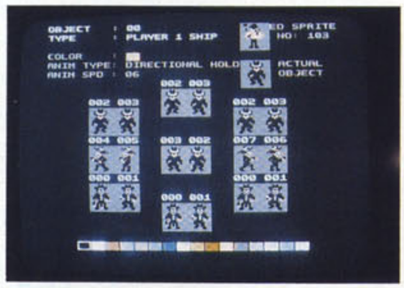
**SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT**: Arcade game addicts can create unlimited joystick-bustin' action with this construction set. The background scenery and dozens of graphics sprites can be altered to fit the action gamers fancy. Includes three pre-designed scenarios for instant arcade gratification or game design hints. C-64 ($14.95). Circle reader service #3.



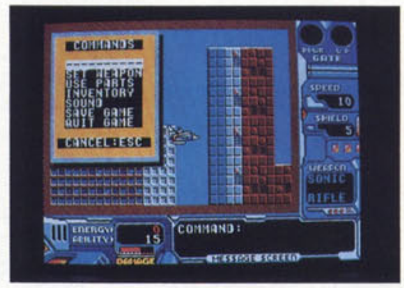

*Harrier 7*



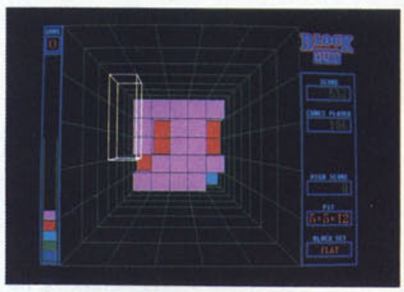

*Mental Blocks*



*Shoot 'Em Up*




*Wibarm*



*Block Out*



*Heavy Barrel*

## Broderbund
## 17 Paul Drive
## San Rafael, CA 94903

**WIBARM**: The player becomes Eizel Cloud, ace intergalactic investigator, out to recapture an orbiting power plant before it explodes and destroys the planet. Using a *Transformer*-like Wibarm (robot/land cruiser/star jet), players search through 32 maze-filled buildings, fight over 30 different monsters with 10 different weapons, and try to piece together clues to solve their mission in this action/role-playing game. Sharp graphics and smooth 360 degree scrolling. IBM ($39.95). Circle reader service #4.

## California Dreams
## 780 Montague Expwy.
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**BLOCK OUT**: Here's another *Tetris*-style game with customizing features. Players decide how big the play area will be (height, width and depth) and then the multi-shaped blocks begin to fall. Working in real time (also customized), players must turn the different shaped blocks that appear to fit the pit they've created. The longer it takes to properly

*(Continued on page 64)*

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# Game of the Year Awards



In previous years, *Computer Gaming World* has awarded "Game of the Year" honors to outstanding games in three different categories and a grand prize "Game of the Year" for the game that stands out from the rest. In addition, special awards for artistic achievement have been granted whenever the editorial staff deemed games worthy of extra praise. Games which reached the market between June of the previous year and June of the year in which the award is presented are eligible for *CGW*'s "Game of the Year" awards.

This year, *CGW* revised its "Top 100 Games" list. Now, games are divided into five basic categories (see the explanation of the various categories on page 36). Therefore, awards were presented in all five categories, as well as the grand prize and two special awards. In the course of the nomination process, CGW observed that every category had, at least, one company with more than one nomination. This is not surprising since a company which excels in publishing one game for a given genre should, logically, be able to excel with other games in the genre.

### Action Game of the Year

Nominees for **Action Game of the Year** are: *Accolade* for **Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Championship Golf**—Ned Martin (designer) and Keith Orr (producer), *Cinemaware* (Phyllis & Robert Jacob, Executive Producers) for **Rocket Ranger**—Kellyn Beck (designer), Bob Lindstrom (music), and John Cutter (producer), *Cinemaware* for **Lords of the Rising Sun**—Doug Barnett (designer), Bob Lindstrom (music), and John Cutter (producer), and *Lucasfilm Games* for **Battlehawks 1942**—Lawrence Holland (designer), Ken Macklin (Special Effects Animation), and Noah Falstein (producer).

And the **WINNER** of *CGW*'s **Action Game of the Year** is:

Lucasfilm Games for *Battlehawks 1942—[Ed: The realistically rendered aircraft and ship images are marvelous, the documentation is rich in detail, and the "instant replay" feature with user-definable perspectives make* Battlehawks 1942 *the winner in an extremely competitive category.]*

### Adventure Game of the Year

Nominees for **Adventure Game of the Year** are: *Sierra* (Ken Williams, Executive Producer) for **King's Quest IV**—Roberta Williams (designer) and William Goldstein (Music), *Sierra* for **Manhunter: New York** , Dave and Barry Murry (designers), *Sierra* for **Space Quest III: Pirates of Pestulon**—Mark Crowe and Scott Murphy (designers), Bob Siebenberg (Music) and Mark Siebert (Sound Effects), *Masterplay* for **Star Saga One: Beyond The Boundary**—Rick Dutton, Walter Freitag, Andrew C. Greenberg, and Michael Massimilla (designers), and *Interplay* for **Neuromancer**—Bruce Balfour, Brian Fargo, Troy A. Miles, and Michael Stackpole (designers), DEVO (music) and Brian Fargo (producer).

And the **WINNER** of *CGW*'s **Adventure Game of the Year** is:

Interplay for *Neuromancer—[Ed:* Neuromancer *is faithful to its Nebula and Hugo award-winning roots in the cyberpunk novel by William Gibson, but it stretches the adventure game genre with its approach to skill development, non-linear solutions to the puzzles, and interface that successfully promulgates the illusion of experiencing cyberspace.]*

This year's Adventure Game of the Year nominees were so competitive that two of the nominees have been singled out for Special Awards.

*CGW*'s **1989 Special Award for Achievement in Sound** goes to Sierra (Ken Williams, Executive Producer) for *Space Quest III: Pirates of Pestulon—[Ed: This award represents the first time* CGW *has given an achievement award specifically for the use of sound in a computer game. Bob Siebenberg, rock musician formerly with "Supertramp", has composed a score that perfectly captures the silly, tongue-in-cheek nature of the game and Mark Siebert has enhanced the enjoyment of the game significantly with aurally superior sound effects which he incorporated into the game using the system created by Stewart Goldstein. The Roland MT-32 reproduces* Space Quest III's *sound with quality that will delight the most discriminating audiophile. Although the Ad Lib card's sound is not quite as rich, the soundtrack on the Ad Lib still shines exponentially better than any other game's audio to date.*

*CGW*'s **Special Award for Literary Achievement** goes to Masterplay for *Star Saga One: Beyond The Boundary—[Ed: This is the first time* CGW *has ever given an award for the fiction presented in a computer game.* Star Saga One *is the most marvelously well-written adventure game ever presented on a computer. Although the game lacks any on-screen graphics, sound effects, or technological chrome, this humorous, challenging, frustrating, exciting and addictive game holds its own as a benchmark of adventure gaming on the computer.]*

### Role-Playing Game of the Year

Nominees for **Role-Playing Game of the Year** are: *Activision* for **Prophecy**—Richard L. Seaborne (designer), Alan J. Murphy (graphics), and Terry Ishida, Stew Perkins, and Kelly Flock (producers), *Mindcraft* for **The Magic Candle**—Ali N. Atabek (designer) and Ugur Atabek, Anthony Postma, and James B. Thomas (graphics), *New World Computing* for **Might and Magic II**—Jon and Michaela Van Caneghem (designers) and Avril Harisson and Jeff Griffeath (graphics), **Strategic Simulations** for **Pool of**

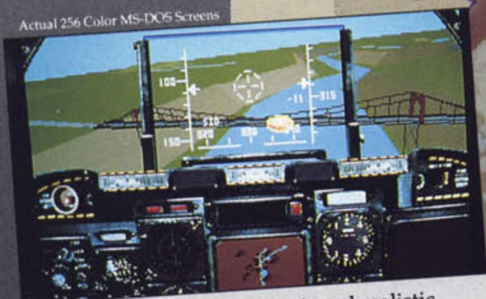
*(Continued on page 41)*

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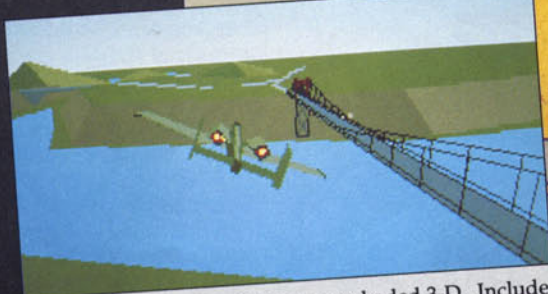

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# Inside the Industry

## News, Notes and Quotes From the Computer Entertainment Industry

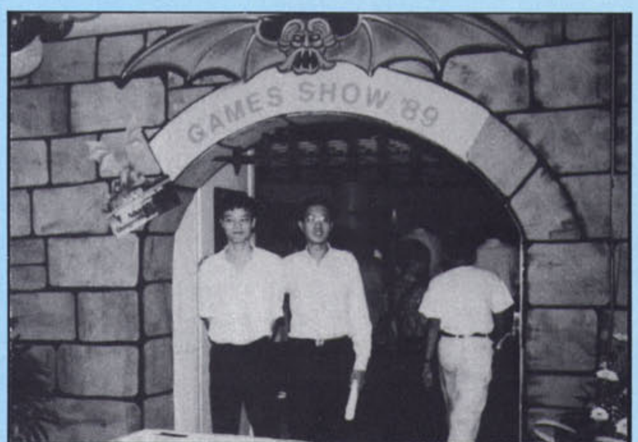
### Electronic Arts Goes Public

A total of 1.94 million shares of common stock are expected to be offered in **Electronic Arts** initial public offering. Upon full capitalization, the public would own about 21% of the total stock issued and **Electronic Arts** could garner as much as $14 million from the sale of the common stock. The capital generated is expected to be used for software development and for the company's long-term strategy of developing videogame software for the 16-bit dedicated game machines and future products based on compact disc storage.

### Sierra Licenses Dynamix Technology

**Sierra On-Line, Inc.**, publisher of *Leisure Suit Larry, King's Quest, Police Quest* and other popular adventure games, has announced an agreement with **Dynamix Inc.**, (developers of *Arctic Fox* and *Abrams Battle Tank* for **Electronic Arts**, as well as *F-14 Tomcat* for **Mediagenic**'s **Activision** label) which will enable **Sierra** to use the three-dimensional technology (*3-Space Technology Software*) developed by **Dynamix** in future **Sierra** products. The technology is expected to be utilized in future animated adventure games from **Sierra**, as well as unspecified future releases. No firm details on future products were given, but the company is expected to enter the simulations market upon acquiring this capability.

Ken Williams, **Sierra** CEO, stated that "*3-Space Technology* will mean whole new arenas in which **Sierra** can produce software. This will also expand the capability of our current SCI language and add a higher degree of realism to our games. Our goal remains the same—interactive films on high end computers—and now we are one step closer."




### Singapore Game Show Fights Piracy

**Telahin Enterprises**, Singapore distributor for eleven U. S. software publishers (as well as CGW), recently held *Games Show '89* at the Westin Stamford Singapore (July 13, 1989). The company, which has assisted law enforcement officials in raiding several stores which were actively pirating software, believes that consumers who experience the added value of production copies are less likely to be satisfied with pirated copies of software in the future. Therefore, one of the goals of the exposition was to offer enough special deals for everyone to buy a game. More than 10,000 people attended the exposition.

### CGW and Origin To Host Tournament

**Computer Gaming World** and **ORIGIN** are jointly sponsoring a National *Omega* Tournament (see Taking A Peek). The tournament challenges all gamers to show off their expertise, matching their designs and programming skills against fellow gamers across the nation. CGW will report on the ongoing tournament and will host the finals which will be covered in the March 1990 issue.

### Game Show Debuts

The "Galaxy of Electronic Games", an exhibition strictly dedicated to computer games and videogames, will be held November 17-19, 1989 in the San Jose Convention Center. The show is expected to offer several contests and demonstrate more than three hundred entertainment software products. In addition, hardware for the new hand-held cartridge games and 16-bit generation of videogames will be shown. Admission is $6.00 per person. The information number for the show is (415) 346-4281.

### Mindscape Dispenses with Disk-Based Copy Protection

Citing disk-based copy protection as ". . . a real sore spot with consumers, . . ." **Mindscape** President and CEO Roger Buoy stated that new titles to be published by **Mindscape** will use manual-based or codebook protection for protection. Specifying the necessity of consumers being able to make back-up copies or install programs on a hard disk, he announced the change in policy. New titles developed by **Mindscape** will now be free of disk-based copy protection, but new versions of earlier titles and products distributed by (yet, not developed by) **Mindscape** may still include disk-based protection. *Balance of Power: The 1990 Edition, Hostage: Rescue Mission, Gauntlet II* and *The Colony* already use manual-based copy protection. *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* and *Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O' Fun* are expected to follow suit.

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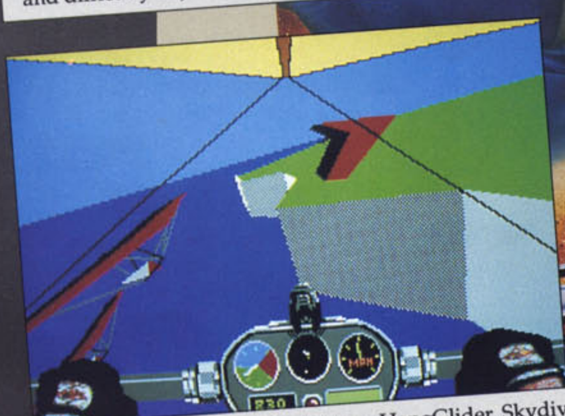
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# The Rumor Bag

*by Benjamin Horace Luce*




New Orleans seemed the perfect place to start soaking up local color in preparation for Roberta Williams' upcoming *The Colonel's Bequest*, a tongue-in-cheek murder mystery set in the bayou country. So, there I was, in Napoleon House (the restaurant located in the house French loyalists intended for the exiled emperor to live after the pirate, Jean Laffite, was to have rescued him), innocently sliding forkful after forkful of delicious jambalaya under the edge of my bag and into my mouth, when a beautiful Creole woman sat down at my table.

She told me she recognized me from my picture in the magazine and asked me if I knew anything about **Sierra**'s new card game. Before I could answer, she told me that *Hoyle's Book of Games* would enable players to compete against characters from other **Sierra** games. She figured Leisure Suit Larry would be an easy mark.

I told her I was more excited about *Hero's Quest*, an adventure game with role-playing elements. Along with the kinds of graphics and sounds that gamers are coming to expect from **Sierra**, are first person style "arcade" combats and the ability to play either a wizard, thief, or warrior.

She thanked me for the information and noted the tourbook of New Orleans resting beside my plate. "Looks like you're on a bit of quest yourself. Need a guide?" Considering it would have been unchivalrous to refuse, I accepted her offer of a whirlwind tour of New Orleans.

We stopped at the New Orleans Pharmacy Museum in the French Quarter. My guide pointed out that voodoo and medicine were curiously intertwined in the early days of the Bayou State. In fact, the docent at the museum noted the numbered potion bottles with everything from love potions to "goofer dust". "If you performed poorly in school," our docent told us, "you'd have to take a dose of goofer dust to straighten you out." He looked at me and whispered, "It's a good thing the folks at **Accolade** don't have any 'goofer dust' or the *Adventures of Elmo in Outer Space* won't ever come out." I wondered how a pharmacy museum in the Big Easy could know about Paul Reichie III's wild and crazy outer space adventure. The game isn't even supposed to be released until 1990. Maybe there's more to this voodoo . . . Naaah!

We called a taxi and headed for the Louisiana Historical Association Confederate Museum. The cab driver noticed my bag and asked if I was here early for Mardi Gras or if I was the guy from "The Rumor Bag". After my confession, he pointed out the Superdome, home of the New Orleans Saints. When I admitted that I was only a casual fan, he asked he asked me when **Melbourne House** was going to publish *Medieval Football*. "Late next spring," I guessed, "I suppose you know all about it." He sure did. He told me about stone sideline markers that make the out of bounds look like a horizontal Stonehenge and players in full armor taking halberd and broadsword to each other.

We stopped at the Confederate Museum and entered the halls where Jefferson Davis' inaugural suit and other memorabilia, General Braxton Bragg's uniform, and other artifacts from the War Between the States are enshrined. My lovely guide smiled and pointed to a Japanese artist carefully studying Bragg's uniform and sketching it. "Koei," she said.

I wasn't exactly sure what she meant until I realized that she was telling me that the artist worked for **Koei Corporation**. I was thrilled. Here was just the confirmation I needed to verify that **Koei** was working on an American Civil War game.

As we rode back toward Preservation Hall, the home of the Dixieland sound, we passed the statue of Robert E. Lee. It reminded me of Bob Jacob from **Cinemaware**. It seems **Cinemaware** has just become the latest Affiliated Label with **Electronic Arts**. The story is that the company is shooting for the next wave of interactive entertainment, so they need someone to handle distribution on the computer side. In fact, the company is not only hard at work on *TV Sports Basketball* for personal computers, but they've already signed with **NEC** to publish CD-ROM versions of *Lords of the Rising Sun* and *It Came From Out of the Desert* (upcoming on personal computers) on the **Turbo Grafx 16**.

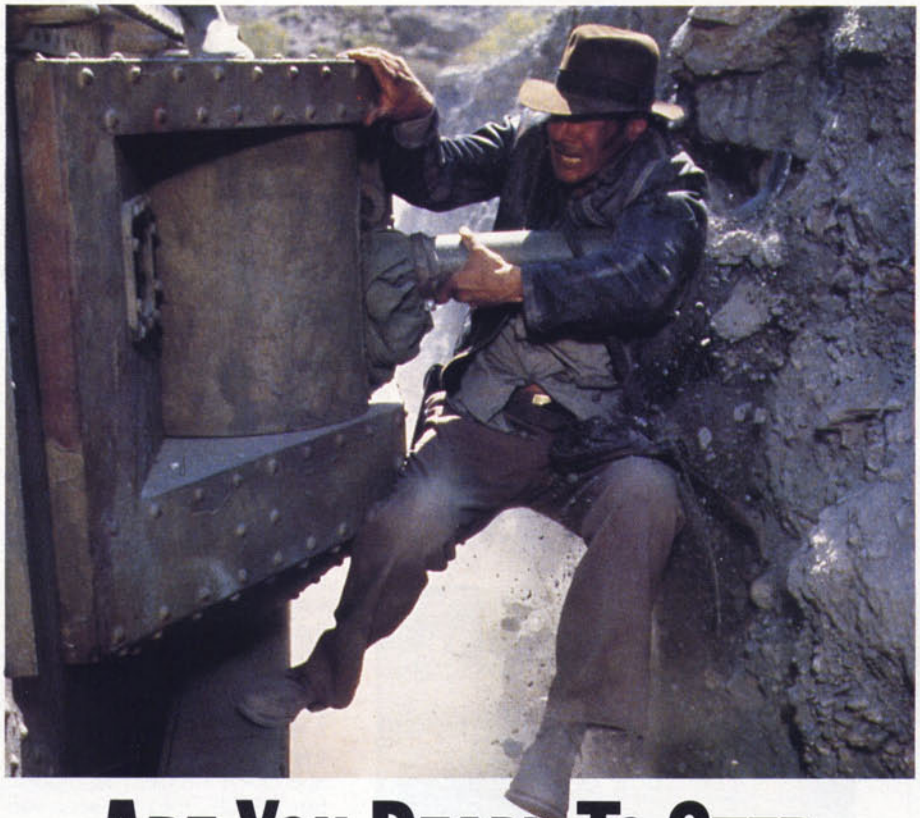
After the concert, we strolled down World Famous Bourbon Street. It really didn't seem as wild as I thought it would be until my guide assured me that I needed to see one particular "girlie" show. It was amazing! Here was a woman with tattoos of different colored dots placed strategically on her upper torso. As she would move, the dots would change colors in a prearranged pattern.

I told my guide that I would personally be worried about infection if I had that many tattoos. She laughed and lead me backstage, repeating my story to the performer. She laughed and told me that **Virgin Mastertronic** had published an abstract strategy game called *Infection* in the U.K. It was apparently the inspiration for her tattoos. "It's a great game," she said, "sort of a cross between *Reversi* and *Go*, but I don't think they're going to call it *Infection* when they bring it to the U.S." Not unless they plan on putting a picture of the New Orleans dancer on the box, I'd wager.

So, that's how I got the rumors for this month's column. Nothing else happened except for one mysterious thing. Do any of our readers know how to remove colored dots from a brown paper bag?

**CGW**

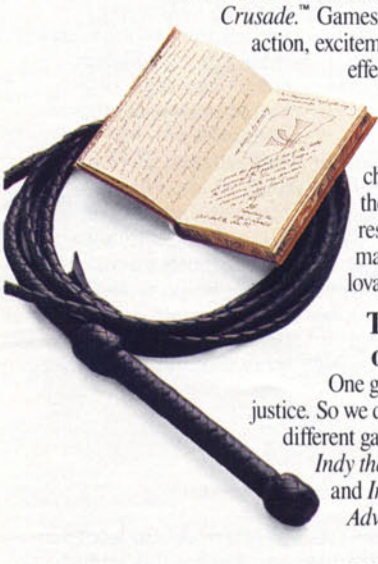
LUCASFILM ON THE ART AND SCIENCE OF ENTERTAINMENT



# ARE YOU READY TO STEP INTO INDY'S SHOES?

Move larger-than-life exploits from the movie screen to the computer screen, and the results are often small potatoes.

Not so with *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.*™ Games that capture the action, excitement, and special effects of the greatest *Indy* movie of them all. And *Indy* the game character has all the style, wit, and resourcefulness that make the big lug so lovable in the movie.



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One game can't do *Indy* justice. So we designed two very different game experiences: *Indy the Action Game*, and *Indy the Graphic Adventure*.

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## Red hot, slam-bam action.

*Indy the Action Game* delivers classic arcade thrills on a hell-bent chase for the greatest treasure in history—the Holy Grail. As *Indy*, you'll use your whip, your fists, and your wits. Escaping grave-robbing cutthroats. Pulverizing Gestapo goons. And surviving the lethal trials of the Grail Temple itself.

## How's your I.Q.?

In *Indy the Graphic Adventure*, you'll find out if you can keep up with the guy with the whip and the hat. Maybe you'll make the same decisions *Indy* made in the movie. Or score higher I.Q. (*Indy Quotient*) points by finding subtle or ingenious alternatives. All the while exploring a stunning world of sights, sounds and characters—many of which you didn't see in the film.

Use Lucasfilm's acclaimed—and enhanced—point n' click interface to toss off a sarcastic one-liner, sweet talk your way out of a tight squeeze, or just haul off and slug the sucker. And thumb through Henry Jones' 64-page Grail Diary for precious and fascinating clues.




*Knocking Nazis off precarious Zeppelin catwalks is all in a day's work in **Indy the Action Game.***



*The trail to the Grail is strewn with rats, skeletons, and much, much worse in **Indy the Graphic Adventure.***

## We made a spectacle of ourselves.

Both games bring you the great graphics, exciting camera angles, and stirring sound tracks that made the *Indiana Jones* films so special.

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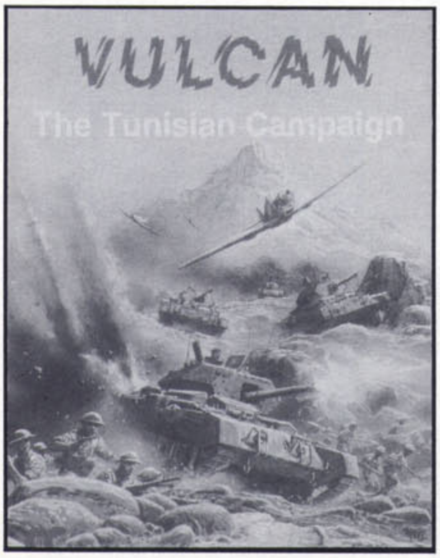
LUCASFILM™ GAMES



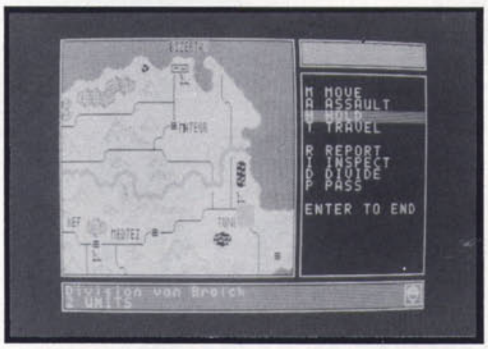

Action game available for Commodore 64, IBM, Atari ST and Amiga. Graphic Adventure available for IBM (includes AdLib™ sound card support), Amiga, and Atari ST.

# Vulcan

*by H. E. Dille*




| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Vulcan |
| SYSTEM: | IBM |
| # PLAYERS: | 1-2 |
| PRICE: | $39.95 |
| DESIGNER: | R.T. Smith |
| PUBLISHER: | Cases Computer Simulations, Inc. (Scorpion) 19 Harbor Dr. Lake Hopatcong NJ 07849 |




During February of 1943, the Axis forces in Tunisia, under the command of General Kesselring, launched a devastating counterattack along the Western Dorsal and centered upon the Kasserine pass. Although territorially inconclusive, this offensive inflicted severe losses upon the 26th U.S. Infantry division and served as a major psychological victory for Axis forces. *Vulcan: The Tunisian Campaign* allows players the option of playing four scenarios (including Kasserine) on a tactical level, or the entire campaign on a strategic level. Scenarios last from one to four hours, while the campaign game generally takes between eight and sixteen hours to complete.

## Staff Briefing

Vulcan is a companion game to *Desert Rats* (reviewed in CGW #58) which covers a supporting theatre of operations and offers some significant improvements over its predecessor. Among these improvements is the addition of a much larger map to display terrain features in greater detail. This augmentation is important both tactically and logistically, given the significance that roads played throughout the campaign.

As in *Desert Rats*, logistical planning is vital to success, and the addition of rules covering zones of control further enhances the players' appreciation for the importance of "beans and bullets". Zones of control relate to a unit's ability to inhibit enemy movement through squares which are adjacent to the one occupied. Thus, as in reality, this allows relatively weak units to establish strong defensive positions in mountains overlooking vital supply lines, and thereby disrupt significantly larger numbers of troops.

Other additions include a significant reduction in unscheduled withdrawals of troops, the representation of air power (albeit in an abbreviated manner, to decrease enemy efficiency through air raid), and hidden movement. This latter improvement is perhaps the most welcome, as few, if any, commanders ever possess the luxury of completely accurate intelligence concerning enemy movement and disposition.

## Winning The War

**(Warning: This section contains specific hints on strategy)**

Assuming that one is playing the campaign game from the Allied point of view, the primary concern must be aggressiveness. German forces are initially very weak, and fortifications in Tunis and Bizerta are virtually non-existent. Try for a rapid dash along the northern road from Tabarka to Bizerta with the first available units. If the Germans have established defensive positions in the mountains or forests along the northern road, retreat, regroup, and bypass them if you can through the road to Mateur. An early success here will allow you to divert more forces to the assault on Tunis. Should you be unable to accomplish this, a good secondary strategy is to move southeast and establish defensive positions along the Gabes-Tunis road, in the hope that you can disrupt supply and crush the German units arriving from North Africa between you and the British forces pursuing them. Care must be taken in this approach, however, to ensure sufficient forces remain in the North to prevent the Germans from cutting allied lines of supply.

As the Axis player, the strategic approach is almost directly the opposite. Defense is everything. It is possible to win the game simply by precluding the allies from capturing both Bizerta and Tunis by the end of April, 1943. Place crack units in both of these objectives and fortify heavily. In addition, establish defensive perimeters along all of the key routes to these cities, taking maximum advantage of the terrain features which increase your defensive posture whenever possible. Counterattack and pursue Allied units only when you know they are weak, exploitable and undersupplied. Also, conserve armored units whenever possible in a mobile reserve position to counter Allied thrusts. Even with the influx of Rommel's forces from North Africa, Allied armored units retain a numerical advantage throughout unless you can reduce them by attrition, utilizing fortified infantry positions. Finally, do not forget about the British forces which are in pursuit of those units arriving from North Africa. If allowed, they can disperse along all of the north-south roads to disrupt supply throughout the entire theatre of operations, or spearhead a massive assault along the Gabes-Tunis road.

## The Final Trumpet

*Vulcan* is a fine game for novice and intermediate level wargamers, or anyone with a particular passion for this period. The improvements made to the operating system are logical and appreciated, although long term re-playability is still an issue. Bottom line: Nothing truly innovative, but recommended nonetheless. **CGW**



# JERMCO

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### KEY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| C | - | Commadore |
| A | - | Apple |
| I | - | IBM |
| MAC | - | Macintosh |
| AM | - | Amiga |
| GS | - | Apple II GS |

### PRODUCTS

**SEE NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE!**

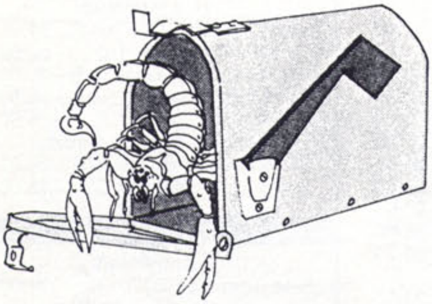
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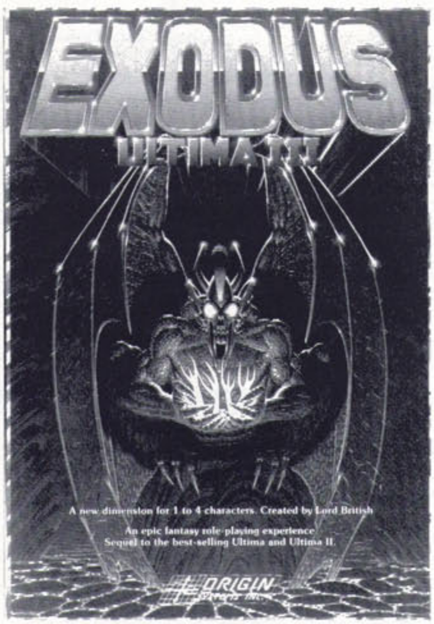
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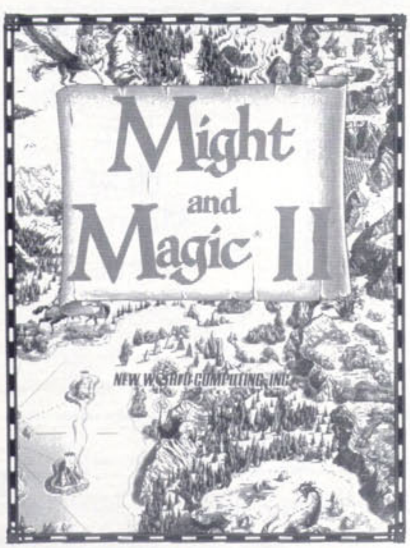
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VISA & MASTER CARD WELCOME

# Scorpion's Mail






Yes friends, it's time once again to haul out the old mail sacks and see what the postal carrier has brought us. Now that the long, hot, days of summer are gone, he's probably going to be overworked soon, especially when the flood of Christmas games starts to arrive. However, it's only October (Fred's favorite month; he does so look forward to Halloween), so the post office has a short breather before the tide rises.

First, though, I must extend my apologies to several readers. Embarrassing to relate, I lost some mail. These were letters sent to me around mid-to-late July. How many in all, I can't say for sure, but it was something like 5 or 6 of them (ouch). This is an extremely rare occurrence, as usually I'm very careful about these things. Unfortunately, it did happen, and I'm really sorry about it. So, for those who may have wondered why you didn't receive a reply, that's the reason.

Ok, now let's take a look in the mailbag.

### Wasteland:

A number of people have been having difficulties with the cylinders in the end game. For this, you need four special keys: blackstar, nova, pulsar, and quasar. If you don't have them, there's no point in going to Cochise just yet; you'll get to the bottom and find you can't do anything (or not much, anyway). Also, regarding the password to Savage Village: if you climb the sand hill in Needles enough times, you'll find out what it is. Persistence pays off (many thanks to Michael Liu of Ontario for passing this one along).

### Ultima III

Some of you out there aren't reading the manual carefully enough (tch!). The only way to increase magic points is to increase intelligence; character level has nothing to do with it. So if you're still stuck with low-level spells, it's time to start looking for a way to raise intelligence (and other attributes as well).

### Prophecy

Several folks are having a hard time finding the password to the Tower of Jed. You can get this from one of the Jedist prisoners being held by the goblins. Look at what they say very carefully; one of them actually does give you the word, although not straight out. You have to put it together yourself.

### Might & Magic II

Orb problems have been bothering a few people. Specifically, getting the orb out of the cavern. This puzzle is certainly illogical, and it's not surprising that people are having trouble with it. Fortunately, the solution is a simple one, as long as you have a hireling in the party.

### Wizardry V

It's amazing how difficult it is to put together a working watch (grin). Of course, if you knew the exact parts you needed, it probably wouldn't be quite so hard. A visit to the Mad Ballroom of Manfretti's, and a chat with a certain thief, should help enormously in this respect.

### Leisure Larry II

Some people have discovered that stuffing a wild bikini is not as easy as it sounds (heh). This is basically a three-part problem. First, you need the proper item. It can be found right there in the guest room. Second, you have to do your stuffing in the right place (careful!). Finally, you also have to use the right syntax in your command (remember that the parser in these games tends to be rather unforgiving).



## King's Quest IV

A few folks have been wondering when they'll be able to play that organ (not to mention, they're tired of climbing all those stairs!). Or rather, play the organ with a positive result. Well, you won't be able to do much about that until after you've taken care of all the ghosts in the night time (if you're wondering if night will ever come, see the Mail column in the June '89 CGW). Also, the witches aren't really as difficult as they may seem to be. Mostly what you need here is good timing. The one chasing you around the pot is easy to avoid so long as you don't get careless (remember, she can't see you). Watch the other two carefully and grab at the right moment.

## Neuromancer

That Comlink 4.0 sure seems hard to find. Then again, it's pretty important, so maybe it's not surprising that it's well-hidden. Maybe you should try an ocean voyage; I hear that the SEA is good for your health (heh).

Well, that's it for this round of the mail column. If you need help with an adventure game (adventures only, please; I can't really help you with games that are primarily arcade), you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: stop by the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu). On GEnie: visit the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). By US Mail: (remember to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States) Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring!



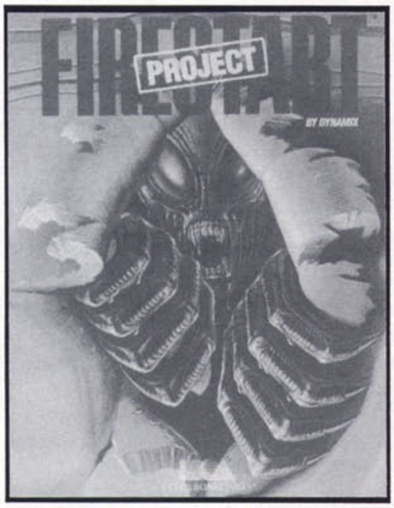
**CGW**



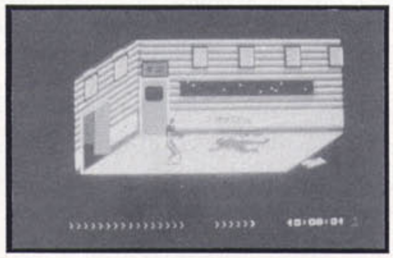
# Quest for Firepower

## *Electronic Arts' "Project Firestart"*

*by David M. Wilson*




| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Project Firestart |
| SYSTEM: | C-64/128 |
| PRICE: | $29.95 |
| DESIGNERS: | Dynamix, Inc. |
| PUBLISHER: | Electronic Arts<br>San Mateo, CA |



*"Okay, Jon," you tell yourself, "Keep your cool." So far this mission has been pretty rugged. You've fought monstrous genetic mutations; rescued the girl; and supervised her safe exit from the ship. You wish you could say the same for yourself. You set the Prometheus' self-destruct mechanism before discovering that the monsters have beaten you to the docking bay and destroyed the shuttle craft which was to have been your lifeboat. Just now, when you radioed for help, mission control informed you that regulations forbid docking to a ship that is set for self-destruct. There has to be a way out!*

**Electronic Arts** bills *Project Firestart* as "A Horror Movie in Outer Space". This is appropriate, since the game is slightly reminiscent of the movie, *Alien*. Play moves through the various decks of the research ship, *Prometheus*. Occasionally, play will be suspended while the scene changes to another part of the ship. The cinematic style suspense builds as the scene changes allow the player to catch glimpses of the enemy operation. There is no beginning and ending theme music, but an entertaining musical score accompanies the scene changes, as well as the monsters during their attacks.

The plot centers around a research ship experimenting in genetic reshaping. The purpose of the reshaping was to produce workers that were capable of working in environments which are generally hostile to humans. When contact was lost with the Prometheus, the System Science Foundation decided to deploy a trained agent to investigate and defuse what could be an explosive situation.

The documentation assists the player by providing sketch maps of the four levels of the ship. Players will have to pay close attention to these maps or they'll find themselves wandering aimlessly throughout the large research ship. Even with the maps, however, it is easy to become disoriented and get lost on the decks.

Basically, *Project Firestart* is an action/adventure. Unlike early games in this genre, there is some interaction with other characters. Unfortunately, players can read the ensuing conversations on the screen, but only rarely do their statements have any impact on the story. This is particularly infuriating when (or if) the player saves the girl. The girl is able to show the player the correct direction to go, but the player is given absolutely no opportunity to ask questions.

Of course, players won't want any opportunity to ask the monsters any questions. These creatures are so tough that it takes five or six laser blasts to blow one apart. Players are advised to get into the healthy habit of closing doors behind them in order to keep the nasty creatures from following them. Usually, players will be able to outrun the creatures. If a player finds himself surrounded, though, he can sometimes run right through the center of the creatures with a minimum of damage to himself. Players always take *some* damage using this tactic, but there is always a reasonable chance of escape.

### "This Is My Laser . . ."

Fortunately, players can accumulate extra weapons during the game. Characters can carry up to two lasers at once, but the "Catch 22" is that a weapon cannot be disposed of until it is completely empty. This requirement not only detracts from a feeling of realism, but also defies logic. One tactic may be to simply fire the weapon into the air until it is emptied in order to be able to throw it down and pick up a stronger weapon. This also doesn't make sense, but it *does* work.

The First Aid boxes, located at various points throughout the ship, are quite useful, as well. Note that they can only be used once, however, and they only restore a limited amount of strength at that. Therefore, they should be used in dire emergencies. At other times, players will be much better off by getting their characters to the medical lab. The lab is definitely the best place to heal wounds and restore strength. Healing is faster and more complete in the lab.

Here are some helpful "Do's and Don'ts" for those who do not mind hints. **Do** search every body. **Don't** raise the lead shield. **Do** check the storage room. **Don't** shoot your laser in the same room as the TNT (I know, you could have figured that one out on your own). **Do** listen to the girl's ideas. **Don't** set the self-destruct until you've saved the girl. **Do** radio mission control for help.

### Problems and Perspective

There are two basic problems with the floppy disks. The first is minor, but irritating. The disk labels begin with Side 0. Since most games have programs which begin with Side 1, there is a very real danger of putting Side 1 in the drive when the program has actually prompted one to put Side 0 into the drive. The second problem involves disk swaps during a restored game. Should a player want to restore a character who has died to the last saved position, he will be forced to swap disks no less than five times. Surely, this could have been avoided. One wants to get on with the game, not swap disks all night.

Ultimately, however, *Project Firestart* succeeds because it is different. One might even be tempted to call it a genetic mutation on its own. It is not traditional in any respect. While the game may fail to satisfy devout action gamers because the pacing of the action is slow or doctrinaire role-players because of the lack of true interaction and character development, it *is* a suspenseful blend of music, graphics, decision-making, action, clues, plot, and even, romance. *Project Firestart* is not likely to set our world on fire, but it will provide you with an interesting adventure. **CGW**



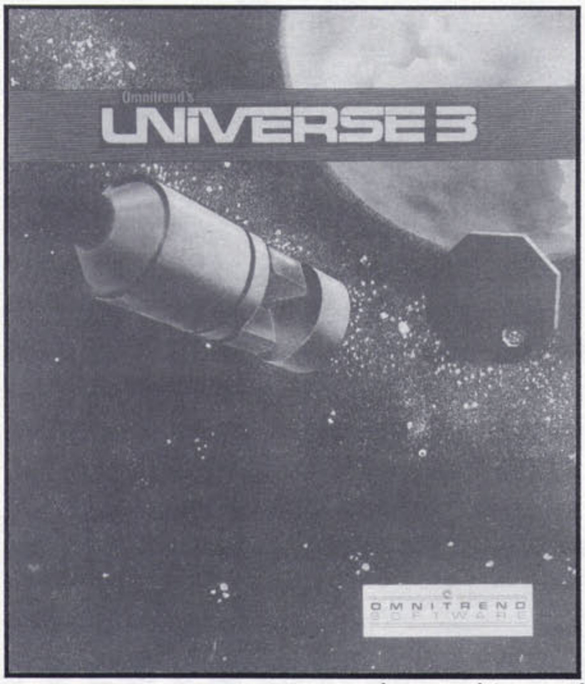
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Where were you ...
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# Universe In A Bucket

## *Omnitrend's "Universe III"*

*by Douglas Seacat*

In many ways, *Universe III* is a "Catch 22" in outer space, a no-win situation. The player assumes the role of a starship captain on a diplomatic mission, but is not informed of dissident members within the diplomatic entourage or impending hostility on the part of the population he is sent to reestablish diplomatic ties with. In addition, he is required to keep the top secret "Hyperdrive Booster" as a guarded secret until he ascertains the success of the diplomatic mission. As designer Leslie told *CGW* readers last July (#49, p. 37), however, "In this product, events just happen to a player. The skill is shown by 'riding out' the circumstances. The player who is more adept at solving puzzles will probably be better equipped to win, but it is still possible for anyone to succeed."




| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Universe III |
| SYSTEMS: | Amiga, IBM<br>Atari ST (coming soon) |
| REVIEWED ON: | Amiga |
| PRICE: | $49.95 |
| DESIGNERS: | Tom Carbone<br>Bill Leslie |
| PUBLISHER: | Omnitrend<br>W. Simsbury, CT |

Game play itself is somewhat reminiscent of the graphic *Quest* series from Sierra with an interface loosely taken from *Breach* and *Paladin*, two of **Omnitrend**'s earlier products. Players primarily view an overhead view of the character on the left side of the monitor screen and access command icons located on the right side of the screen in order to manipulate the character. The icons allow the player to: move the character in the cardinal directions, pick up/drop items, check status, fire a weapon, or choose from a short list of "verbs" which allow more detailed action (e.g. "Examine", "Wear", "Put", "Give", etc.). There are also keyboard commands for those who do not like to use the mouse.

The simple-to-use interface enables the character to explore location by location in order to locate tools and discover clues of sabotage and intrigue. Each location, of course, contains objects necessary to complete tasks and solve puzzles at later points in the game. So, thorough exploration and examination of all objects is important. This becomes even more critical due to the "no return" nature of some of the locations. Once some areas have been left behind, they will never be seen again. Players are advised to keep at least one save of each major location, in case an object has been forgotten. As the story progresses, the game takes the player's character from his orbiting ship through a deserted isolation habitat into a rundown town, and finally, to the Hyperspace Booster and endgame.

### Commendations

My favorite aspect of the game was the way the designers included several ways to access the commands, particularly the special movement commands which allow the character to "jump" (move directly into a room) and "trace" (follow a player-delineated path) in order to avoid being forced to plod slowly back and forth between screens. In addition, there were several aspects of the plot and atmosphere which were extremely well-done by the designers. Further, the entire story shows a strong sense of humor with plenty of off-the-wall puzzles and encounters. The humor offsets some of the heavy-handed "intrigue" aspects of the plot and provides some welcome comedy relief.

### Reprimands

Unfortunately, the entire design does not work as well as the movement features. The designers obviously wanted to avoid using a parser to handle various commands, but the "verb list" is so restrictive that it offers even more frustration than some of the earliest parsers. The actions which a character can perform are severely limited and some of the commands that do exist are only used once or twice in the course of an entire game. What the game really needs is a ubiquitous "use" verb. One "use" verb would have been of more service than half the ones in the present *Universe III* verb list.

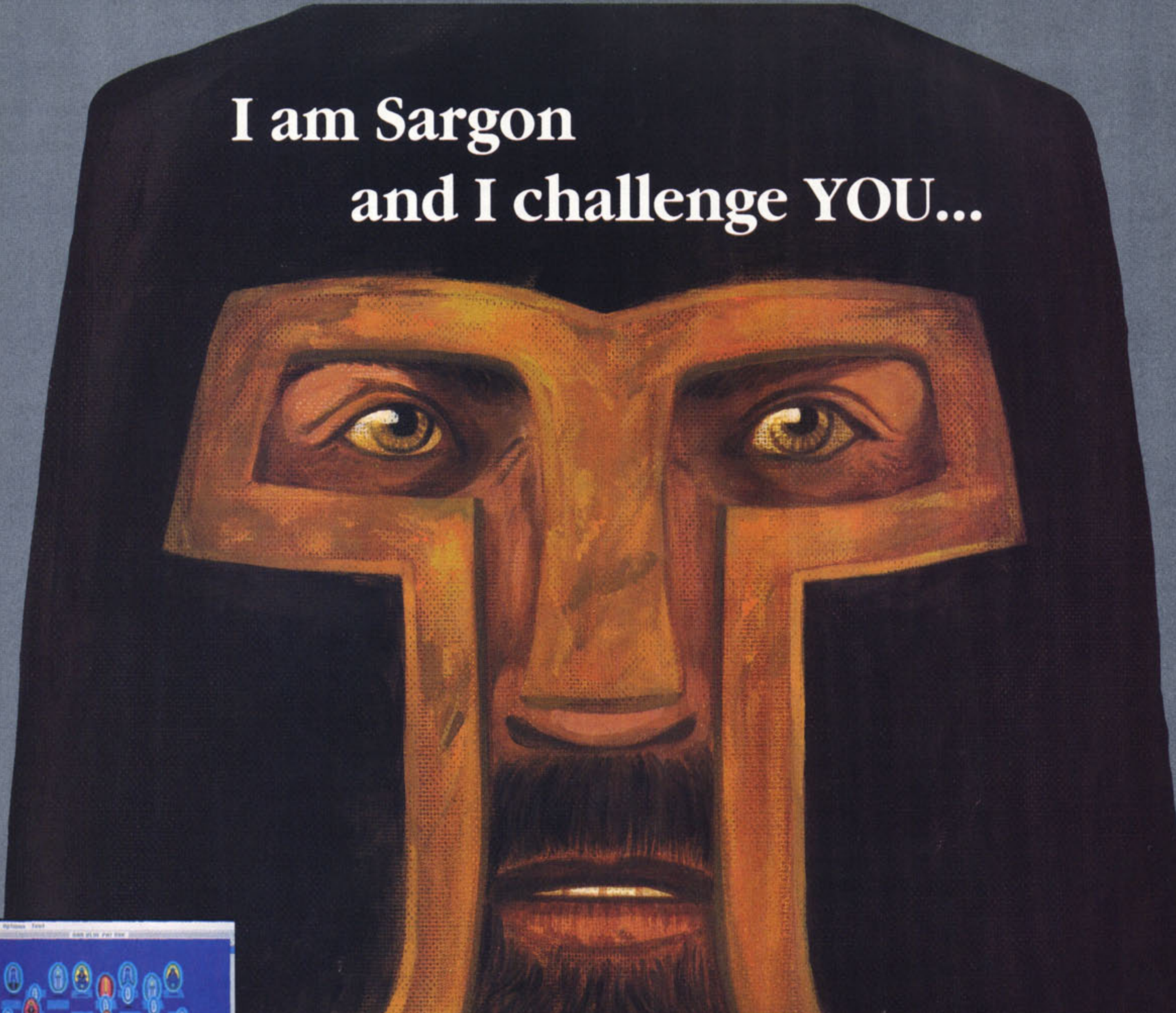
To further aggravate the problem, the game has the tendency to choose which objects can be used with which verbs. Many of the objects do not seem to be available with any verbs at all. For example, when the "Put" verb is activated, a list of objects which can be "Put" is shown. The game will only display those objects which will need to be "Put" in order to solve a puzzle. Not only does this frustrate the player by limiting his apparent control over the game environment, but it actually makes the puzzles easier. By limiting the number of objects which can be acted upon by a verb, the correct choice becomes that much simpler. Even if only *some* objects are actually used with "Put" in order to solve puzzles, the others should be presented for experimentation and only ruled out by the *player's* discretion.

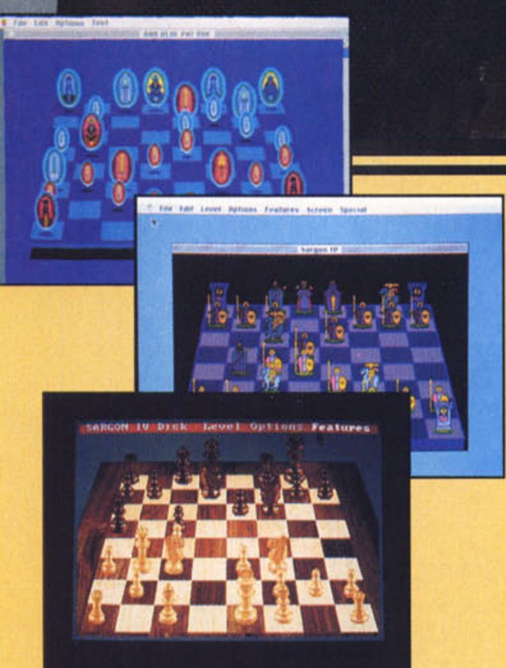
Another disappointment concerns the almost complete lack of character interaction. All dialogues are automatic and happen at key times with virtually no player control. The verb list contains an "Order" command which should have allowed the player's character to interact with his crew and passengers. Unfortunately, the command simply provides automatic responses that have little effect on game play.

The most disappointing aspect of the game is its extreme linearity. *Universe III* allows almost no deviation from the required path and the linearity is made even more obvious by the limited commands available. While it is understandable that the designers were attempting to emphasize a strong

*(Continued on page 22)*

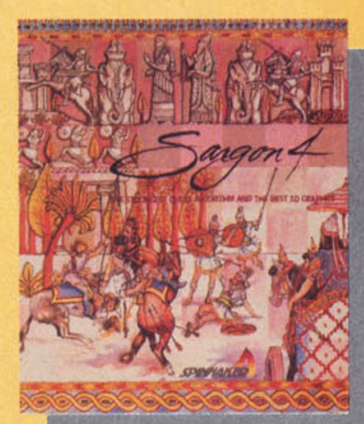
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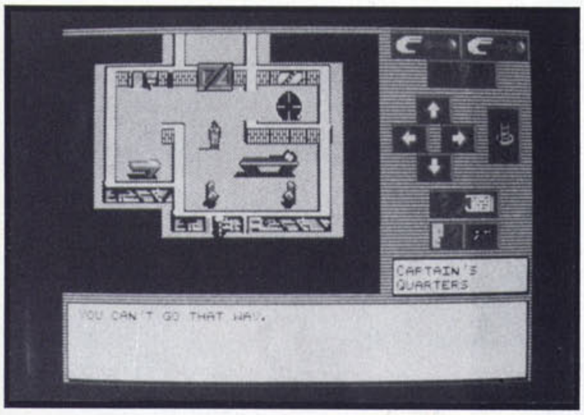

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(Continued from page 20)

*story* line and stories are linear, it is regrettable that they sacrificed player flexibility to accomplish this. Also, the abandonment of the strategic elements, so crucial to and successful in *Paladin* and *Breach*, seems an ill-conceived sacrifice on the altar of storytelling. Where deemphasis of combat would be desirable in some CRPGs, it seems like *Universe III* has gone too far in the other direction.




Another disappointing element is the limited feedback which players receive when an improper action is attempted. The game simply reports that such an action is impossible. Given the obvious sense of humor displayed by the authors in other sections of the game, wouldn't some description of the negative consequences have been extremely entertaining?

Finally, this reviewer feels frustrated that there is so little game to the game. *Universe III* only offers four major locations, each with only a handful of rooms. This tends to give the player very little to work with and leaves him/her thinking "Is that all?" One would think that a game with the audacity to call itself a "Universe" ought to have enough flexibility and room to back it up. *[Ed: There seems to be a recurring theme here. Alert readers will remember Charles Ardai's review of* Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders *in* CGW #52 *and how it suggested that the environment of the game was too big to be adequately simulated. Whereas the same approach had worked well in* Maniac Mansion *because a house is limited enough for the simulation to be rich and fully realized. Ardai noted that when Zak limited San Francisco to half a dozen screens, it became a simulation that felt as flat as a movie town made of propped-up facades. Perhaps, something of the same phenomenon is at work in Universe III.]*

## Findings

Frankly, *Universe III* is not as good as its most recent predecessors (*Breach* and *Paladin*). Where its predecessors demonstrated flexibility and depth, *Universe III* is rigid and narrow. Those who have played *Universe* and *Universe II* will want to play this game to continue the series and some Amiga and IBM owners will want to play the game as a diversion. Nevertheless, one cannot help but have the feeling that *Universe III* is not what **Omnitrend** was shooting for. **CGW**

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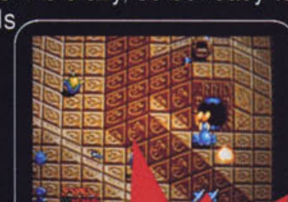

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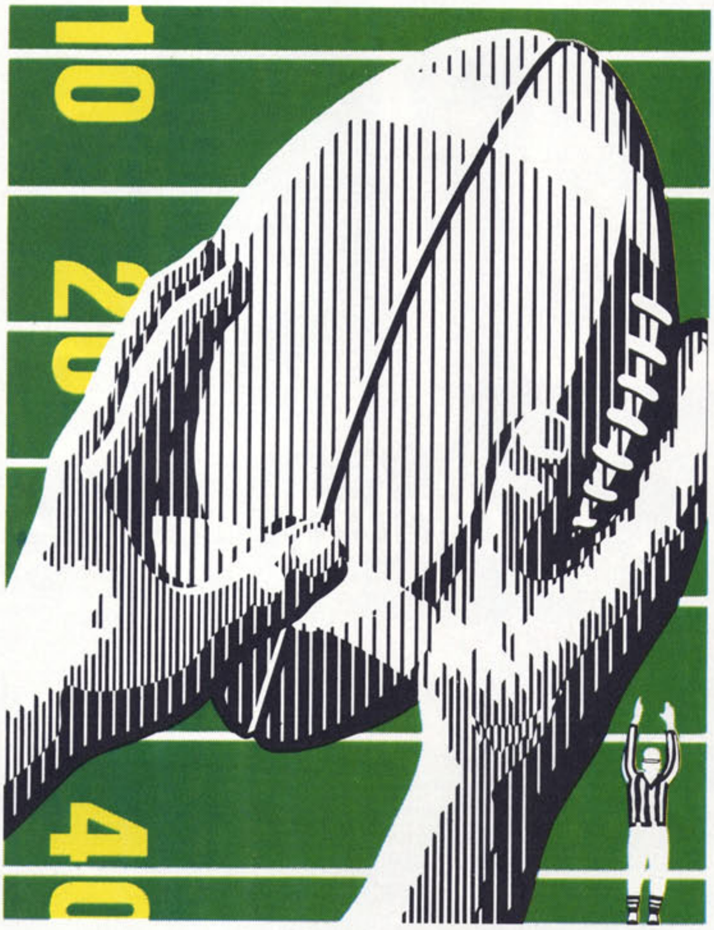
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**New From SPINNAKER**

# Wishbone Warfare

## CGW Revisits The Electronic Gridiron

*by Wyatt Lee*




As the gold, brown, orange, yellow and red shades enliven the trees with a brilliant palette, providing the antepenult to their annual lifecycle, it's once again time to visit those gladiators of the gridiron and knights of the nickel defense, computer football games. There is plenty of news from the "front offices" of entertainment softwaredom and that means plenty of "personnel moves" by *CGW* readers. This survey is intended to supply an update on what has happened since our last football survey (*CGW* #42) and general sports survey (*CGW* #58).

### "It was a designed play!"

One of the best features of the latest computer football games is the ability to design one's own team and playbook from scratch. **Broderbund**'s *Playmaker Football*, **Electronic Arts**'s *John Madden Football*, **Data East**'s *ABC Monday Night Football* and **Activision**'s off-beat and *not quite* football game, *Grave Yardage*, all allow players to design actual plays. **Micro Sports, Inc.**'s *MSFL Pro League Football* allows players to design a basic gameplan. In addition, all the games mentioned previously, except **Cinemaware**'s *TV Sports Football* (Atari ST version) and *MSFL Pro League Football* (which requires a separate *MSFL Pro Draft Disk*), allow players to create customized rosters by either editing the ability ratings of individual players or drafting from a player pool.

### "We've assembled a team with all the ingredients necessary for a championship."

**Broderbund**'s *Playmaker Football* (*PF*—Macintosh only with Hard Drive highly recommended, to be released in November, 1989, $49.95) offers the most depth in terms of customizing teams. Even the title offers a signal as to what the game design is supposed to accomplish. The player is the one who "makes" the plays. He is the coach and general manager. Players do not have to use anything "canned". Instead, they can create the roster, the offensive and defensive playbooks, and the artificial intelligence that calls the plays when the computer is running games on the player's behalf (particularly useful for league play).

The roster, of course, is built around player attributes. In *PF*, the important ratings are: Speed, Strength, Agility, Intelligence, and Discipline. The design works well enough that each incremental change is significant and different attributes affect the performances of players at each position differently. In fact, if offensive plays are already designed when Speed ratings are changed, the timing of that play will be consistently off. So, rosters should be built prior to the playbooks. Rosters are built around a standard 7,500 total points. Players can adjust that total number, but whenever teams that exceed 7,500 points face teams that have ad-

hered to the standard total, the computer flashes a warning about the mismatch before any actual games can take place. The game can still be played, but the handicap will be obvious.

An additional piece of chrome that makes creating the player roster interesting is the ability to customize the player photos. Players simply copy the "Team Picture File" to their favorite Macintosh paint program, edit it there, and move the file back to *PF* as "<team name> Picture".

The playbook allows for tremendous versatility. On offense, linemen and non-ball carriers can be assigned five different types of blocks: continuous blocks, push left, push right, standard blocks at a particular location, or pass blocks. Herein lies a disadvantage, however. There are, unlike the Play Editor in *John Madden Football*, no provisions for making "group assignments" where several players perform the same actions. Instead, each lineman must be assigned his particular block.

For rushing plays, "coaches" can either set the exact path for ball carriers to run (not advised) or simply identify the path to the "hole" and let the running back "run to daylight" (preferred). On passing plays, "coaches" can design timed patterns where the quarterback will throw at the same time every time to one assigned receiver. Or, if the "coach" prefers, the play can prioritize receivers so that the artificial intelligence (AI) will look to each receiver in turn and, if they should all be covered, throw the ball out of bounds. Just to round out the possibilities, the play editor also allows "coaches" to program play-action fakes, pump fakes and pauses at particular points in the play and establish three "Audibles" (plays from the playbook which can be selected from the keyboard at any point in the game).

On defense, "coaches" assign the linebackers various "reading" commands. Depending on the situation, linemen can be ordered to "read" the running backs or the offensive linemen. Then, on the basis of the "reading", they can make either a lateral pursuit (the conservative approach) or execute a "run and shoot" (the more risky method). For deep backs, "coaches" establish the drop-back spot and delineate a zone of coverage from that point. If the "coach" prefers man-to-man coverage, he can select standard coverage (where the defensive player lines up opposite the assigned receiver and sticks with him), partial man-to-man (where the backs who are *not* assigned a particular receiver to cover must cover potential receivers in a priority order given in the documentation), total man-to-man (backs try to spread coverage all over the field according to the priority list), and double coverage (two backs guarding a particularly dangerous receiver).

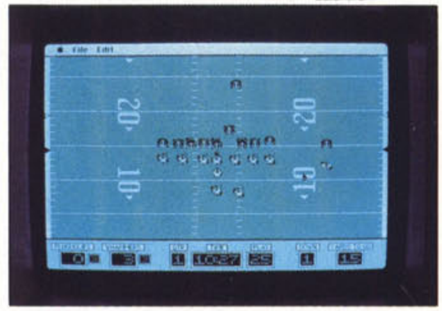
**"You don't want to go away empty in this situation."**

The most revolutionary aspect of *Playmaker Football* is the ability to design an AI to call plays based on the game situation (see illustration). Each play is assigned values, related to each possible down, for Priority (percentage which indicates the frequency with which the play will likely be called), Yards to Go (modifies the Priority by considering yardage required for a first down), Field Position (determines if the play can be called from a particular portion of the field), Game Time (evaluates plays in terms of which quarter the game is in), and Score Difference (establishes whether a risky play should be used with regard to points to be gained or loss relative to the differential in scores).

As if this wasn't enough, the AI is also set to evaluate plays on the basis of effectiveness. If the "Sample" number is set at "1", for example, the AI will evaluate the effectiveness *every* time the play is run. At "2", the play would be evaluated every second time it is run and so forth. The AI can be set, as in the illustration, so that the Priority percentage can be dropped by one point if the play does not, at least, average better than a loss of two yards per play or raised by two points if the play averages better than a gain of five yards per play.

Although *PF* has few weaknesses, they do exist. Those who want to be more actively involved in *playing* will find that the

*Broderbund's Playmaker Football*



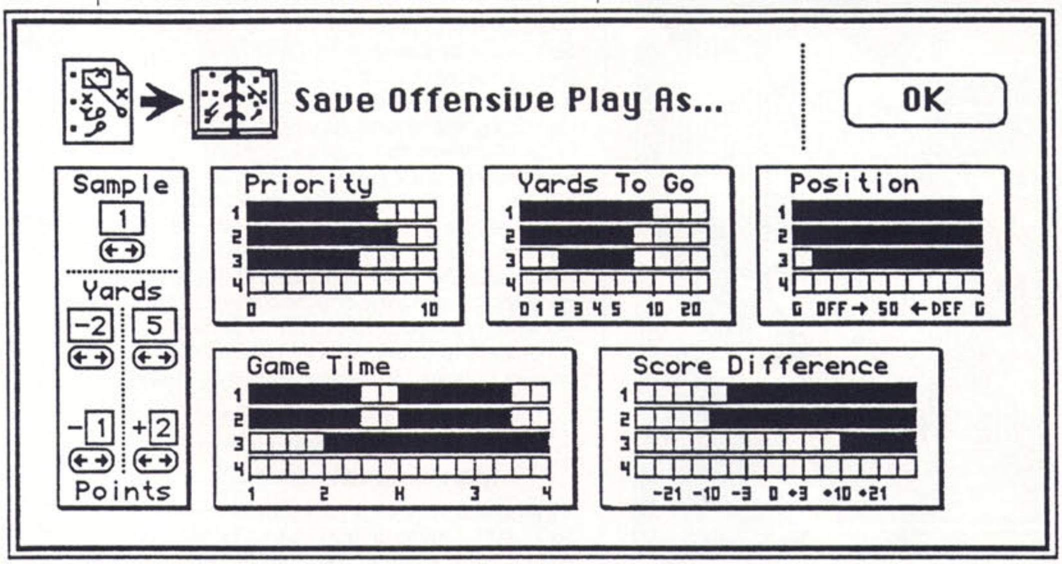
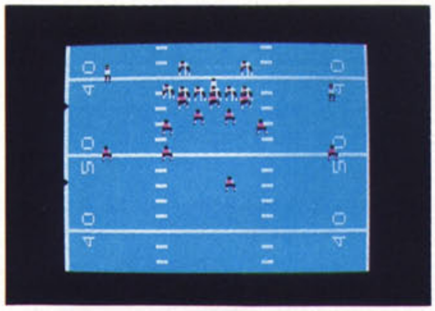


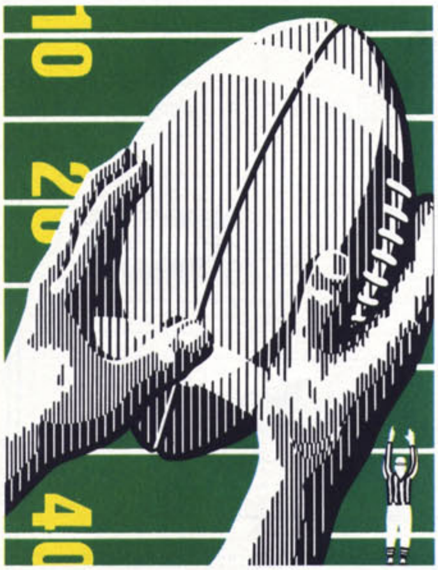

*Illustration of Playmaker Football's AI Design Screen*




*EA's John Madden Football*



*Software Simulations' Pure Stat Football*



minimal involvement of pointing and clicking in a general direction to direct a ball carrier or passer is not satisfying. Further, those who want to keep accurate track of individual player statistics will find that the game design has predicated in favor of a team stat approach. Also, those who want a game where weather, fatigue, and player injuries impact the outcome will be disappointed that these factors are missing from *PF*. Nevertheless, *Playmaker Football* is an exceptional product for armchair coaches and general managers. Its strengths should be evident and its use of AI has revolutionary potential for future strategy games.

**"It all comes down to the individual matchups."**

**Electronic Arts**'s *John Madden Football* (*JMF*—Apple II, IBM, $49.95) offers a product that offers somewhat less in strategy, but somewhat more in terms of action. Like *PF*, the "Chalkboard" (Play Editor) allows "coaches" to assign pass blocks, rushing blocks, and blocks to trap left and trap right. It doesn't allow continuous blocks, however. Like *PF*, it allows play action fakes and allows the primary pass receiver to be identified, but does not go as deep in prioritizing secondary receivers. *JMF*'s capacity for assigning "group tasks" certainly speeds playbook construction, though. One's preference for these two games will probably depend on how much detail and control one wants in play construction.

As for rosters, "coaches" will want to pay considerably more attention to individual match-ups in *JMF* because a difference of two or more points on the zero to nine scale utilized in *JMF* indicates domination. Coaches that find a way to exploit mismatches will be very successful in this game. Further, the game's consideration of weather, player fatigue, and individual injuries will enhance the enjoyment of replaying NFL seasons or running leagues. The "Madden Report", a basic

Players who want to be involved in the on-field action will be more satisfied with *JMF* than with *PF*. Although *JMF* can be played as strictly a strategy game, the player can transform the game into an action game by moving the controller while the ball is in play (Apple users must have a joystick in order to operate the offense, but IBM users may opt for mouse or keyboard control.). At that point, one can actually control the ball carrier or passer/receiver. At this point, good joystick jockeys may be able to "make up" for the coaching and play on a level field with their more cerebral, pure coaching, friends and vice versa.

A major weakness in *JMF* is the computer defense's poor capacity for adjusting to misdirection plays. Fortunately, the graphics on the IBM version (received at press time) are much clearer than the muddled colors of the Apple II version (pictured). Nevertheless, Apple II owners will be impressed with what their 64K machines can do. *John Madden Football* is an excellent choice for those who want both action and strategy elements in a computer football game.

**"He says that when things go wrong, they fire the coach and not the quarterback, so he calls his own plays."**

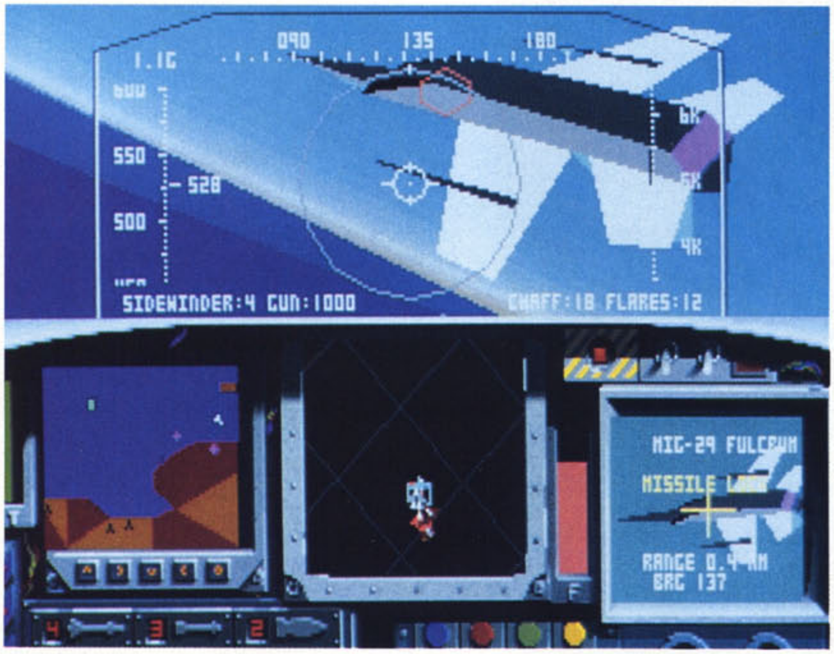
**Software Simulations**' *Pure Stat Football* (*PSF*—C-64/128 and IBM, $39.95) is a streamlined, menu-driven approach to football with an emphasis on play calling. It emulates the coach who wants full responsibility for controlling the pace of the game. Those familiar with *Pure Stat Baseball* and *Pure Stat College Basketball*, as well as **Avalon Hill**'s *NBA* will recognize the basic interface. The decision screen is divided into three screen areas: 1) game and scoring information, 2) player statistical information, and 3) play entry menu / result screen.

The beauty of the program is that player ratings (for blocking, running, passing, catching, or defending) directly affect the success of a given play. The documentation notes which players' ratings affect a given play, so "coaches" can have a good idea of the potential effectiveness of a play before calling it. As in *JMF*, alert offensive "coaches" can get plenty of mileage (or yardage, anyway) out of exploiting mismatches. On the other hand, defensive "coaches" can gamble and increase the defensive rating for a given area by blitzing a linebacker in that direction. In turn, the offensive coach may exploit the linebacker's vacated area by throwing a short pass.

The upside is that the documentation is the most thorough and useful of any games in the *Pure Stat* series. The menu

*(Continued on page 28)*

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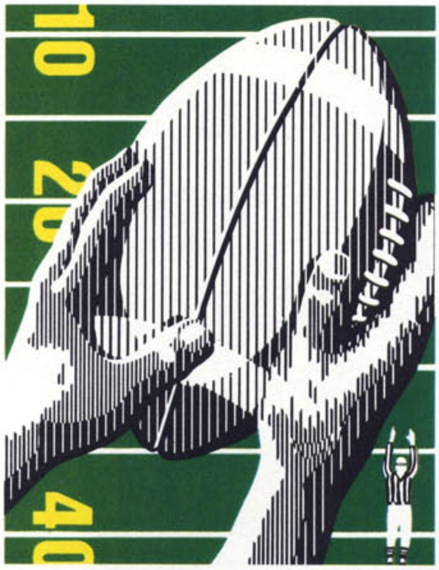
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(Continued from page 26)



interface makes the game accessible for even the most casual football fan and, on the IBM, the game plays faster than previous releases. The downside is that the animation is, at best, crude and the IBM graphics are CGA blue and magenta, even in EGA mode.

### "He's an expert at reading defenses, a real field general, and all the players respect him."

**Cinemaware**'s *TV Sports Football* (*TVSF*) is now available on the Atari ST ($49.95—the Amiga version was reviewed in *CGW* #56). The game solidly emphasizes the sound, color, and action of professional football. Game play is entirely joystick-driven and "coaches" quickly choose from four basic offensive and defensive formations. After that, one uses the joystick to select from four basic patterns. The name of the game is not play selection in *TVSF*, however. Action is the by-word. Gaining yardage on rushing plays is more dependent on a joystick-crunching left or right cut by the ball carrier than on a sophisticated game plan. The advantage of this activity is the satisfaction the "human" player gets when the on-screen ball carrier beats the on-screen defender. One feels as if they have made that great run themselves.

Most of the weaknesses discussed in *CGW* #56 still hold, but the active player no longer flashes in the same color as the opposing team and the machine language coding makes the movement even smoother than on the Amiga version. However, the view of the playing field is still limited to about 25 yards or so and this makes it difficult, but not impossible to complete long passes. Also, the Atari ST version does not allow access to the team statistical data *a la* the Amiga version and the statistics compiler *still* does not allow the league stats to be printed.

*TV Sports Football* is a colorful and exciting action product. It is ideal for the casual fan who wants to compete against his buddies, joystick-to-joystick. Unfortunately, it could be much more.

### "Where did they dig him up?"

**Activision**'s *Grave Yardage* (*GY*—IBM, $34.95) is, at once, similar and dissimilar to the programs discussed above. It is similar in that the game involves smoothly animated players attempting to cross a playing field and score against their opponents, as well as because "coaches" can draft their player roster and build offensive and defensive playbooks. It is dissimilar in that teams are made of dwarves, elves, gargoyles, ghouls, goblins, ogres, orcs, trolls, wizards, and zombies in this farcical and fanciful look at the game of football. Fields can be made of mud, weeds, and grass, as well as land mines. The "flyball" wings about like a "Beholder" misplaced from a fantasy game and skeletal-looking referees make nasty comments when things aren't going so well for your team.

In *Grave Yardage*, the game becomes, very literally, a game of territorial conquest. Players do not simply carry out their blocking assignments. They murder their opponents. In fact, they receive 86 points for accomplishing that nefarious

(Continued on page 31)



*Cinemaware's TV Sports Football*



*Activision's Grave Yardage*

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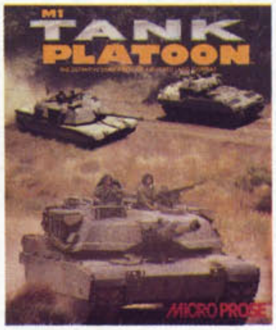





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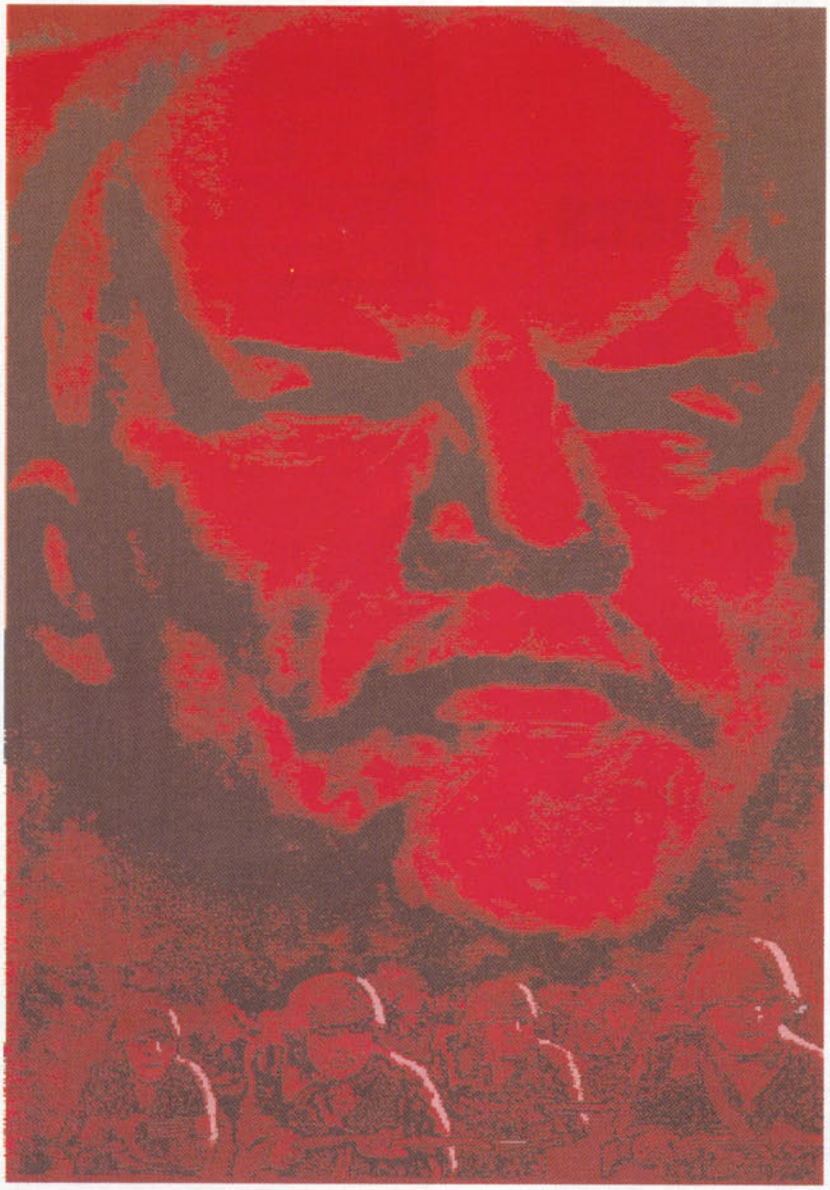
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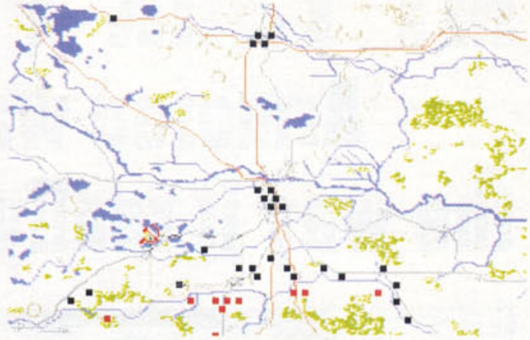


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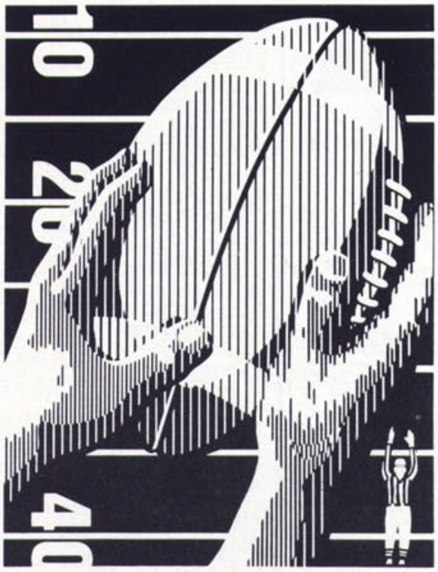
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(Continued from page 28)




deed (only 14 points less than scoring a Smushdown). Ball carriers are not simply tackled, but they may be hacked senseless or be blown up by a land mine (which brings about a 25 point penalty for "littering", by the way).

In spite of the farce, however, the reality is that *GY* is a weird version of four-on-four football. "Coaches" must exploit matchups (each type of monster has different attributes which help in different situations), utilize good play selection (it is still a matter of run, pass, misdirection, and options), design successful plays, and execute the game plan effectively. Even so, if it weren't for the playbook editor, reviewing this game in this football survey would be inappropriate. However, the ability to draft monsters for a ball control, pro set, or aerial bombardment style offense and the ability to create the plays to customize just such offenses is part of the game. With only four players per team on the field and a very intuitive interface for designing the playbooks, it doesn't take long to create a completely customized team. "Coaches" can create quarterback sneaks, crossing pass patterns, sweeps, and bombs using the editor. Of course, the plays aren't called by traditional football names. Instead of "32 Blast" and "28 Sweep Counter", one creates the likes of "Orcbutcher" and "Fiendflyer" to match the atmosphere of the "Monster Football League".

"Coaches" will need, at least, a 286 processor and EGA card to get the most enjoyment out of *Grave Yardage*. The program is unbearably slow between play selection and actual action on the older machines. In addition, the CGA palette adds nothing to enhance the game (unless one considers the near-Halloween colors to be appropriate). Further, although the program supports keyboard-driven action, "coaches" will want to coax their monsters onward with the joystick interface. The response to the keyboard commands is sluggish and the keyboard commands themselves are awkward and clumsy. However, for those who want some of the action and excitement of football with a funny fictional wrap rather than the "serious" and sometimes sterile strategic approach, *Grave Yardage* should be an interesting choice.

## "It's Monday night and we've got a dandy for ya'!"

**Data East** is expected to release *ABC Monday Night Football* (*MNF*—IBM with C-64/128 to follow, no price given) prior to Christmas. *CGW* has only seen a demo of this game, but the VGA graphics

(Continued on page 67)

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| | |
|---|---|
| Arkanoid | $21 |
| Bal Power 1990 | $34 |
| Bard's Tale I or II | $34 |
| Chess 2100 | $34 |
| Cribbage - Gin | $41 |
| Defender Crown | $34 |
| Dungeon Master | $28 |
| Elway QBack | $34 |
| Gold Rush | $28 |
| Hunt Red Oct | $28 |
| John Elway | $34 |
| King Chicago | $34 |
| Kings Qst I-IV ea | $34 |
| Nickalaus Golf | $34 |
| Neuromancer | $34 |
| Pirates | $28 |
| Police Quest | $34 |
| Reach Stars | $28 |
| Revolution '76 | $34 |
| Rocket Ranger | $34 |
| Silent Service | $28 |
| Silpheed | $24 |
| Skate or Die | $28 |
| Space Qst I or II | $34 |
| Star Saga II | $53 |
| Test Drive II | $31 |
| Cal. Chall. | $15 |
| Supercars | $15 |
| Tetris | $28 |
| War Mid Earth | $34 |
| World Carmen | $31 |
| World Tour Golf | $28 |
| Xenocide | $34 |
| Zany Golf | $28 |

## MAC

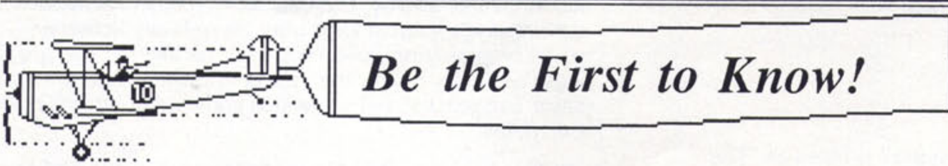
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|---|---|
| AA War Sea | $31 |
| Arkanoid | $34 |
| Bal Power 1990 | $34 |
| Bard's Tale | $34 |
| Breach | $28 |
| Carmen USA | $34 |
| Chuck Yeager | $34 |
| Deja Vu II | $34 |
| Fire Brigade | $35 |
| Gauntlet | $34 |
| Journey | $34 |
| King's Quest II | $34 |
| Pirates | $41 |
| Quarterstaff | $34 |
| Reach - Stars | $28 |
| Shogun | $41 |
| Sim City | $34 |
| Tetris | $24 |
| Univ Military | $34 |
| Zork Zero | $41 |

## Hint Books

| | |
|---|---|
| Bard's Tale I-III ea | $10 |
| Black Cauldron | $8 |
| Deathlord | $10 |
| Dungeon Master | $10 |
| DM Maps & Spells | $5 |
| Faery Tale | $10 |
| Future Magic | $10 |
| Heroes Lance | $7 |
| Gold Rush | $8 |
| King's Qst I-IV ea. | $8 |
| Manhunter | $9 |
| Maniac Mansion | $8 |
| Mars Saga | $12 |
| Master Collection | $10 |
| Might & Magic I | $12 |
| Neuromancer | $12 |
| Police Qst I or II | $8 |
| Pool Radiance | $10 |
| Qst Clues I or II | $19 |
| 688 Attack Sub | $10 |
| Space Qst I or II | $8 |
| Starflight | $10 |
| Ultima IV | $10 |
| Ultima V | $12 |
| Zak McKracken | $8 |

## ACCESSORIES

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|---|---|
| Amiga 1/2 Meg Expansion | $160 |
| Air Drive - Amiga | $160 |
| Sony DSDD 5.25 | $9 |
| Sony DSDD 3.5 | $20 |
| Head Cleaner - 5.25 Disk | $6 |
| Head Cleaner - 3.5 Disk | $6 |
| EPYX Joystick (C64, Am, ST) | $15 |
| EPYX Joystick (App, IBM) | $28 |
| Gravis Joystick IBM | $38 |
| Gravis Joystick Am, ST, C64 | $34 |
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**Battle of Britain - IBM, AM**
**Battles of Napoleon - IBM**
**Dragon Force - ST**
**Dragon Wars - App, C-64**
**Empire - C-64**
**Gold of Americas - IBM**
**Harpoon - IBM**
**It Came - Desert - Amiga**
**M-1 Tank Platoon - IBM**
**Might & Magic II - C-64**
**Pirates - Amiga**
**Red Lightning - Amiga**

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# The Sport of Fiends

## Cinemaware Puts the "Spotlight" on "Speedball"

*by Robert W. Struble*

*Robert Struble is a Staff Sergeant with Special Forces training. Along with his military background, he has a Bachelor of Science in Criminology.*




*Coming out of the dark into the arena, you blink in the hot glare of the spotlights. The steel walls resound with the cheers and calls of the crowd. You acknowledge them and the stands grow wild. You and your team are the favorites tonight. This is more than just a game, this is the League Championship, the cumulation of a fifty week bone cracking, head crushing season. As the ball launcher rises from the floor and begins to spin, the ancient words ring forth . . .*

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Speedball |
| SYSTEMS: | Amiga, Atari ST, C-64/128 and IBM |
| REVIEWED: | IBM |
| # PLAYERS: | 1-2 |
| PRICE: | $29.99 |
| DESIGNERS: | The Bitmap Brothers |
| PUBLISHER: | Cinemaware Westlake Village, CA 91362 |

### "PLAY BALL!"

*Speedball* is billed as "The Fastest Growing Sport of the 21st Century." One can certainly see why! Reminiscent of Jai-lai, the game seems like a combination of "killer" racquetball and "combat" hockey. Add the feel of the movie "Rollerball" and you have one fast-paced rollercoaster of a game. Thankfully, this was never released as a coin-op game. It would have been a serious quarter muncher. In EGA, you keep looking for the coin slot in your keyboard. Even in CGA mode, the graphics approach arcade quality.

The rulebook is concise. In fact, it's a bit primitive, but the user friendly setup screens allow for quick start-up and play. Using either keyboard (using four directional keys and a combination throw/block/jump key) or joystick, a player can find themselves in the thick of things in no time at all. A choice between "One Player Knockout" and "League Play" (Human vs. Human or Human vs. Computer) insures a wide variety of play.

The field of play features two Warp Tunnels. These cause the ball to exit from the opposite tunnel with identical velocity and direction. There is also a random selection of Bounce Domes, powerful magnetic fields which can deflect a thrown game ball. Depending on their placement (always symmetrical), you may have partially shielded goals or even be blocked off entirely from the Warp Tunnels.

Passing is accomplished by simply throwing the ball toward another teammate. Whenever the ball contacts a figure, it is received automatically and that individual becomes the active player. The action key enables players to throw the ball, loft the ball, jump to catch a loft shot, or tackle another player and steal the ball. The latter is one of the most pleasing aspects of the game. There is great gratification in watching your opponent skid across the floor plates as you "slam dunk" the goal.

Each team is characterized by levels of Stamina, Power and Skill. Stamina allows your team to throw hard, run fast and hang onto the ball after being blocked. Power controls the amount of Stamina drained from an opponent after each block. Skill Allows for more effective tackles by both the active player and the rest of the team. A highly skilled team will show great initiative and tackle the opposition even when not under direct control. This enables such satisfying thrills as scoring a goal while another of your team has the goalie cornered outside of the net.

Cheating is a major factor to the game. A player can actually bribe the game ref before, or even after, the game. During a game, random floor plates will flip over exposing one of ten Power Tiles. Running over a tile activates the specific power. These range from decreasing your opponents' stamina to protecting your team from tackles through turning the ball into a eight count stun weapon. An eleventh tile is called a Power Token, these are accumulated to bribe the ref. Bribes cost anywhere from two to seven Tokens and can buy almost anything from an extra minute of game time added to the previous game or extra Skill to an extra goal added to your next game.

### Major League (Pluses)

The outstanding graphics are an instant grabber and the action (simple to play, but difficult to master) continues to capture one's interest long after an ordinary action game would be gathering dust. Nice touches like the ball growing larger as it lofts nearer the ceiling and the different ways a player can react to being tackled show great attention to artistic detail.

As for play itself, the independence and initiative of one's own teammates when the computer is controlling them give the game an amazing feel that the team is "alive." Also, the stat board and descriptions of opposing teams aid in making those difficult tactical choices.

### MINOR LEAGUE (Minuses)

The most significant problem is an inability to continue past ten weeks in league play. After the tenth week/game your team rests for a week then resumes play on week one. It should, however, be week eleven. Teams retain all their stats, but find themselves unable to compete in the playoffs which are supposed to take place at the season's end. This affects the game concept considerably. **Cinemaware**'s customer service department says that they have rectified the

*(Continued on page 47)*

# PATTON WOULD BE JEALOUS.




With TANK™, a battle star is born! In this M1 Abrams® simulation, your weapons systems and enemy forces are totally authentic. Deploy your forces in West Germany, Ft. Knox, or the Middle East amidst incredibly realistic terrain created by outstanding 3-D solid modeling graphics. Lead a company, platoon or an individual tank against a formidable enemy committed to the Soviet Doctrine of War. Just how long 'til the Russian Frogfoot comes to this party?

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# Computer Gaming World's

See Reader Input Device on page 71

### The Categories

*Strategy (ST): Games that emphasize strategic planning and problem solving.*

*Simulation (SI): Games based on first person perspectives of real world environments.*

*Adventure (AD): Games that allow you to take your alter ego through a storyline or series of events.*

*Role-Playing Adventures (RP): Adventure games that are based on character development (usually involving attributes).*

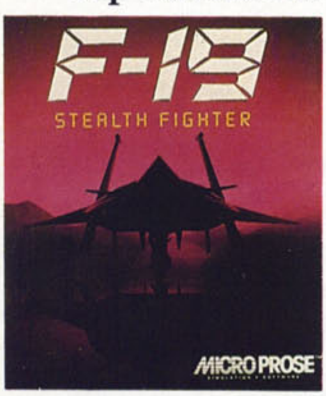
*Wargames (WG): Simulations of historical or futuristic warfare from a command perspective.*

*Action/Arcade (AC): Computer games that emphasize hand-eye coordination and reflexes.*

### Top Role-Playing




### Top Simulation




## THE TOP TEN GAMES

| No. | Name | Mfg. | Machine | Cat. | Avg. # Resp. | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | *Dungeon Master* | *FTL* | *Am,GS,ST* | *RP* | *95* | *10.58* |
| 2. | *SimCity* | *Maxis* | *Am,C,M* | *ST,SI* | *24* | *10.04* |
| 3. | *F-19 Stealth Fighter* | *MicPr* | *I* | *SI* | *70* | *10.01* |
| 4. | *Curse of Azure Bonds* | *SSI* | *C,I* | *RP* | *23* | *9.87* |
| 5. | *Lords of Rising Sun* | *Cnmwre* | *Am* | *AC,ST* | *42* | *9.57* |
| 6. | *Red Storm Rising* | *MicPr* | *C,I* | *SI* | *53* | *9.43* |
| 7. | *Overrun* | *SSI* | *Ap,I* | *WG* | *20* | *9.41* |
| 8. | *Battlehawks 1942* | *LucasFilm* | *Am,I,ST* | *AC,SI* | *68* | *9.32* |
| 9. | *Battles of Napoleon* | *SSI* | *Ap,C* | *WG* | *31* | *9.28* |
| 10. | *Wasteland* | *EA* | *Ap,C,I* | *RP* | *112* | *9.26* |

| No. | Name | Mfg. | Machines | Cat. | Avg # Resp. | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. | Ultima V | Origin | Ap,I | RP | 99 | 9.21 |
| 12. | Pool of Radiance | SSI | Ap,C,I | RP | 100 | 9.14 |
| 13. | Might & Magic II | NwWrld | Ap | RP | 46 | 9.04 |
| 14. | Bard's Tale III | EA | Ap,C | RP | 74 | 9.03 |
| | Space Quest III | Sierra | I | AD | 29 | 9.03 |
| 16. | Romance/3Kngdms | Koei | I | ST,RP | 31 | 8.96 |
| 17. | The Magic Candle | Mndcrft | Ap,C,I | RP | 40 | 8.94 |
| 18. | Neuromancer | Interplay | Ap,C | AD | 31 | 8.90 |
| 19. | NFL Challenge | XOR | I,M | ST | 86 | 8.87 |
| 20. | Genghis Khan | Koei | I | ST,RP | 32 | 8.79 |
| | Project Stealth Ftr | MicPr | C | SI | 29 | 8.79 |
| 22. | Battletech | Infocom | Am,I | RP | 48 | 8.77 |
| | Fire Brigade | Panther | Am,I,M | WG | 22 | 8.77 |
| 24. | Airborne Ranger | MicPr | C,I | AC | 74 | 8.76 |
| 25. | King's Quest IV | Sierra | I,GS,ST | AD | 58 | 8.75 |
| 26. | Falcon | SpcHolo | Many | SI | 61 | 8.73 |
| 27. | Rocket Ranger | Cnmwre | Am | AC,AD | 74 | 8.71 |
| 28. | Battlechess | Interplay | Am,I | ST | 58 | 8.68 |
| 29. | Typhoon of Steel | SSI | Ap,C | WG | 43 | 8.67 |
| | 688 Attack Sub | EA | I | SI,ST | 45 | 8.67 |
| 31. | Ballistyx | Psygns | Am,ST | AC | 20 | 8.65 |
| | Police Quest II | Sierra | I,GS | AD | 43 | 8.65 |
| | Zany Golf | EA | Am,I,ST | AC | 31 | 8.65 |
| 34. | Jack Nicklaus' Golf | Acclde | Am,C,I | AC,ST | 28 | 8.64 |
| 35. | Sword of Sodan | Discvry | Am,GS | AC | 27 | 8.63 |
| 36. | Nobunaga's Ambition | Koei | I | ST,RP | 51 | 8.53 |
| 37. | Carrier Command | Rainbird | Am,I,ST | AC,WG | 49 | 8.51 |
| | Panzer Strike | SSI | Ap,C | WG | 68 | 8.51 |
| 39. | Silent Service | MicPr | Many | SI | 257 | 8.50 |
| 40. | TV Sports Football | Cnmwre | Am | AC,ST | 51 | 8.49 |
| 41. | Hostage | Mndscpe | Am,I,ST | AC | 28 | 8.47 |
| 42. | Arkanoid | Dsc/Taito | Many | AC | 69 | 8.38 |
| | Wings of Fury | Brdbnd | Ap | AC | 52 | 8.38 |
| 44. | Strike Fleet | EA | Ap,C,I | WG | 79 | 8.37 |
| 45. | Leisure Suit Lry II | Sierra | I,GS,ST | AD | 52 | 8.31 |
| 46. | Prophecy | Activisn | Am,I | RP | 31 | 8.30 |
| 47. | Modem Wars | EA | C,I | ST | 24 | 8.29 |
| 48. | Manhunter | Sierra | Many | AD | 72 | 8.25 |
| 49. | Police Quest | Sierra | Many | AD | 98 | 8.23 |
| 50. | Starglider II | Rainbird | Am,ST | AC | 65 | 8.22 |
| 51. | Three Stooges | Cnmwre | Am,C | AC | 68 | 8.21 |
| 52. | Battlegroup | SSI | Ap,C | WG | 36 | 8.19 |
| 53. | Abrams Battle Tank | EA | I | AC,SI | 31 | 8.16 |
| 54. | Tetris | SpcHolo | Many | AC,ST | 46 | 8.13 |
| 55. | Stealth Mission | Sublogic | C | SI | 36 | 8.11 |

# Top 100 Games

## THE HALL OF FAME

*The Games In CGW's Hall Of Fame Have Been Highly Rated By Our Readers Over Time. They Are Worthy Of Play By All.*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bard's Tale I** | **Might & Magic** |
| **Chessmaster** | **M.U.L.E.** |
| **Earl Weaver Baseball** | **Pirates** |
| **Empire** | **Starflight** |
| **Gettysburg** | **Ultima III** |
| **Gunship** | **Ultima IV** |
| **Kampfgruppe** | **War in Russia** |
| **Mech Brigade** | **Wizardry** |

| No. | Name | Mfg. | Machines | Cat. | Avg # Resp. | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56. | Shiloh | SSI | Ap,C,I | WG | 54 | 8.09 |
| | Zork Series | Infocom | Many | AD | 218 | 8.09 |
| 58. | Faery Tale Adventure | Micllsn | Many | RP | 59 | 8.07 |
| 59. | Russia | SSG | Ap,C | WG | 61 | 8.05 |
| 60. | Sentinel Worlds | EA | I | RP | 71 | 8.04 |
| | Techno-Cop | Epyx | C | AC | 23 | 8.04 |
| 62. | Test Drive II | Acclde | Am,C | AC | 50 | 8.08 |
| 63. | WC Leader Board | Access | Many | AC,ST | 97 | 8.00 |
| 64. | Leather Goddesses | Infocom | Many | AD | 136 | 7.99 |
| 65. | Breach | Omntrnd | Am,M,ST | ST,RP | 114 | 7.98 |
| 66. | Enchanter | Infocom | Many | AD | 115 | 7.97 |
| 67. | Jordan vs Bird | EA | C,I | AC | 47 | 7.96 |
| 68. | Wizardry V | Sir-Tech | Ap,I | RP | 43 | 7.88 |
| 69. | Eternal Dagger | SSI | Many | RP | 72 | 7.85 |
| 70. | Rommel | SSG | Ap,C | WG | 20 | 7.80 |
| 71. | Halls of Montezuma | SSG | Ap,C,I | WG | 44 | 7.75 |
| 72. | Anc Art of War At Sea | Brdbnd | I,M | ST | 108 | 7.74 |
| | Phantasie III | SSI | Many | RP | 105 | 7.74 |
| 74. | Phantasie | SSI | Many | RP | 147 | 7.69 |
| 75. | Star Saga I | Mstrply | Many | AD | 37 | 7.66 |
| 76. | War in Middle Earth | Melbrne | Many | ST | 57 | 7.65 |
| 77. | Bard's Tale II | EA | Many | RP | 166 | 7.64 |
| 78. | Grand Prix | Acclde | Am,I | AC | 46 | 7.63 |
| 79. | Sorceror | Infocom | Many | AD | 71 | 7.62 |
| | Spellbreaker | Infocom | Many | AD | 93 | 7.62 |
| | Wizard's Crown | SSI | Ap,C,I | RP | 133 | 7.62 |
| 82. | Dec. Battles III | SSG | Ap,C | WG | 23 | 7.57 |
| | Hitchhiker's Guide | Infocom | Many | AD | 198 | 7.57 |
| 84. | Balance of Power | Mndscpe | Many | ST | 70 | 7.55 |
| | Gold Rush | Sierra | I | AD | 20 | 7.55 |
| 86. | Demon Stalkers | EA | C | AC,AD | 57 | 7.54 |
| 87. | Shadowgate | Mndscpe | Am,I,M | AD | 66 | 7.53 |
| 88. | Quarterstaff | Infocom | M | RP | 23 | 7.52 |
| | Wishbringer | Infocom | Many | AD | 81 | 7.52 |
| 90. | Legacy of Ancients | EA | AP,C,I | RP | 134 | 7.50 |
| | Silpheed | Sierra | I | AC | 22 | 7.50 |
| 92. | Planetfall | Infocom | Many | AD | 139 | 7.49 |
| 93. | Battlecruiser | SSI | Ap,At,C | WG | 42 | 7.48 |
| 94. | Reach For Stars | SSG | Many | ST | 38 | 7.45 |
| 95. | Autoduel | Origin | Ap | RP | 175 | 7.44 |
| 96. | Heroes of the Lance | SSI | Am,C,I | AC,AD | 77 | 7.43 |
| | King's Quest II | Sierra | AP,I | AD | 115 | 7.43 |
| 98. | Defender of Crown | Cnmware | Many | AC,ST | 253 | 7.39 |
| 99. | Lode Runner | EA | Many | AC | 124 | 7.36 |
| 100. | MicroLeagBB | MicrLeag | Many | ST | 137 | 7.32 |

### Top Strategy



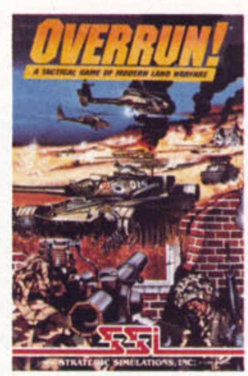

### Top Action/Arcade




### Top Adventure




### Top Wargame





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SHORTSWORD +2, OF QUICKNESS
LONGSWORD +1, CURSED *
LONGSWORD +1
LONGSWORD OF THE PLANES (NEUTRAL GOOD), SPEECH & TELEPATHY, LANGUAGES:3, LOCATE OBJECT IN A 120' RADIUS, DETECT TRAPS OF LARGE SIZE IN A 10' RADIUS, DETECT INVISIBLE OBJECTS IN A 10' RADIUS, TELEKINESIS (2,500GP MAX, 2 TIMES/DAY, 1 ROUND PER USE), IQ:17, EGO:17
LONGSWORD +4, DEFENDER
BROADSWORD +2, CURSED BERSERKING *
SHORTSWORD +4, DEFENDER
(<,>,<-,->)CURSOR UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, (CTRL-D) DELETE, (CTRL-P) NEW PARAGRAPH, (CTRL-Q) QUIT, ANYTHING ELSE TO INSERT?
APPLE II DISPLAY
APPLE II DISPLAY
IBM DISPLAY

# What Do You Do for




*by Russell Sipe*

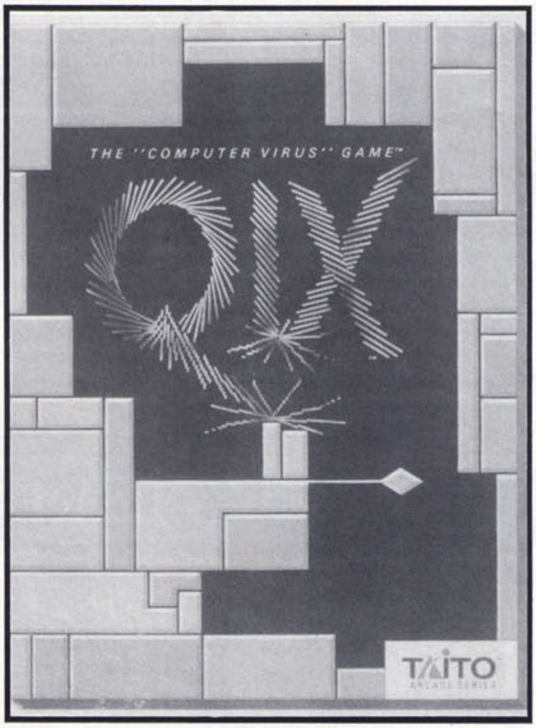
QIX (pronounced kicks) is a classic mind game living in an action game world. As such, it can be difficult to describe. While it is definitely a classic style game that demands the development of a strategy or strategies, it can just as easily be described as an action game that rewards fast thinking and fast reflexes. It is definitely addictive. I do love and hate it so.

From the strategic perspective, your task is to trap the ever moving QIX (a nervous little twerp that manifests itself as a series of rapidly moving semi-parallel lines). You trap the QIX by drawing a series of "boxes" that isolate it from the larger play field. If the QIX touches you while you are in the act of tracing the box, it kills you. The secret is to trap the QIX into the smallest space possible. The smaller the space the QIX is trapped in, the higher your score.

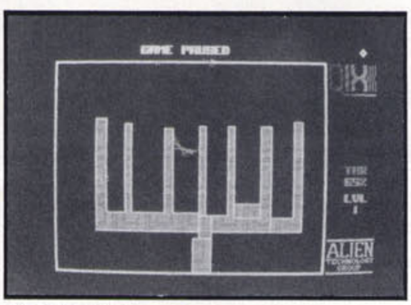
The fiction supporting the game is weak. But don't hold *that* against **Taito** (this game is so unique that any fictional background would be found wanting). The fiction, in any case, is that the QIX is a computer virus bouncing around inside your computer; you isolate the QIX by immunizing your computer system through the drawing of "boxes". In the meantime, the QIX is spawning mutant offspring or subviruses that race around the edges of the playfield and your immunized boxes seeking to destroy you. — Well, like I said . . .

If QIX sounds familiar to you, it might be that you remember when it was a coin-op hit on many college campuses back in the early 1980's. Back in those days, college students poured quarter after quarter into machines playing and developing strategies to beat each other at QIX. Many strategies developed over time. The three most famous were/are the MIT, Harvard, and Stanford strategies.

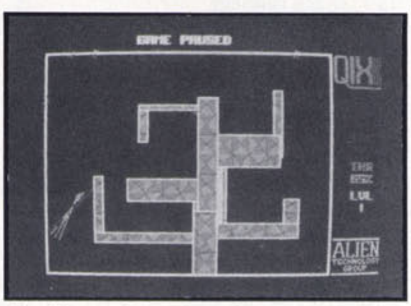
The goal in the MIT strategy was to build a fork like structure that had many slots which, hopefully, the QIX would wander into. When the QIX got far enough down into the slot, the player could seal it off, scoring big bonus points by isolating the QIX in a very small space (often 10% or less of the playfield). In the



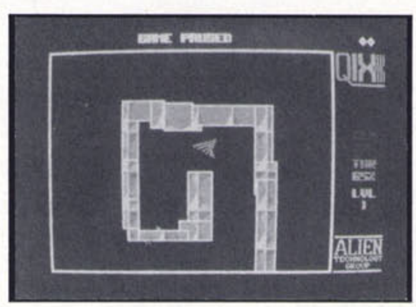

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | QIX |
| SYSTEMS: | Amiga, C-64/128 |
| PRICE: | $34.95 |
| PUBLISHER: | Taito<br>North Vancouver, British Columbia<br>CANADA |




*The MIT Fork*




*The Harvard Tree*




*The Stanford Spiral*

Harvard strategy, the goal was to build a tree like structure that divided the playfield into a number of trapping quadrants. And in the Stanford strategy, the goal is to trap the QIX in an ever decreasing spiral.

I prefer the MIT Fork strategy. It can be constructed more rapidly than the Harvard Tree (time is important as the sub-viruses multiply as time goes on). The problem I have with the Stanford Spiral strategy is based on the simple fact that the QIX in a smaller area bounces more often than in a larger area (sort of like a bull in a china shop). As you paint the QIX into increasing smaller areas, it tends to be harder to avoid (gets kind of crowded there). As I draw boxes to drive the QIX deeper into the trap, I am actually exposing myself to the danger of it's lethal touch (leaning into a left hook as it were).

QIX is a fascinating game. It is highly recommended to those who are at one with the universe; to those who are prepared to pursue purposeful strategy in the face of intense action. I do love and hate it so. **CGW**

# Conversions Received




Fast Break (Accolade) Mac

Jack Nicklaus Course Disk (Accolade) Apple IIGS

Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit (Accolade) Amiga

Where in Europe is Carmen Sandiego (Broderbund) Mac

Batman Data East) Amiga

Commisioner's Disk (EA) Amiga

Faery Tale Adventure (Microillusions) IBM

Firepower (Microillusions) C-64

Balance of Power 1990 (Mindscape) ST

Hostage (Mindscape) C-64

Times of Lore (Origin) Amiga, ST

Pure-Stat Football (Software Simulations) C-64

Red Lightning (SSI) Amiga

Rommel (SSG) IBM with new EGA graphics

(Continued from page 8)

**Radiance**—Jim Ward and George MacDonald (designers), Tom Wahl (graphics), and Chuck Kroegel (producer).

And the **WINNER** of *CGW*'s **Role-Playing Game of the Year** is:

Mindcraft for *The Magic Candle*—*[Ed: The game's innovative use of a host of individual statistics to measure character development (as opposed to the more typical experience level promotions), emphasis on learning new skills, ability to split the adventuring party to accomplish simultaneous tasks, and ability to have significant interaction with non-player characters at almost any point in the game make this an excellent game. It is extensive, well-written, and balanced.]*

**Simulation Game of the Year**

Nominees for *CGW*'s **Simulation Game of the Year** are: *Electronic Arts* for **688 Attack Sub**—John W. Ratliff, Paul Grace and Randall Breen (designers), Michael Kosaka and Wilfredo Aguilar (graphics), Rob Hubbard (music), and Paul Grace (producer), *Microprose* for **F-19 Stealth Fighter**—Sid Meier, Jim Synoski, and Arnold Hendrick (designers), Max Remington III and Murray Taylor (graphics), and Ken Lagace (music), *Microprose* for **Red Storm**

*Announcing*

# Computer Gaming World's 1989 Game of the Year Awards

*Action Game of the Year*
**Battlehawks 1942**

*Strategy Game of the Year*
**Romance of the Three Kingdoms**

*Adventure Game of the Year*
**Neuromancer**

*Role-Playing Game of the Year*
**The Magic Candle**

*Simulation Game of the Year*
**F-19 Stealth Fighter**

*Wargame of the Year*
**Battles of Napoleon**

*Special Award for Achievement in Sound*
**Space Quest III**

*Special Award for Literary Achievement*
**Star Saga I**



*Game of the Year*
**SimCity**

**Rising**—Sid Meier and Arnold Hendrick (designers), Murray Taylor and Max Remington III (graphics), and Ken Lagace (Music), and *Spectrum-Holobyte* for **Falcon A.T.**—Gilman Louie (designer), Jody Sather and Art Koch (graphics), and Kevin Seghitti (sound).

And the **WINNER** of *CGW*'s **Simulation Game of the Year** is:

Microprose for *F-19 Stealth Fighter—[Ed:* F-19 Stealth Fighter *is the perfect marriage of modern technology and game. It couples hot graphics with new perspectives of the game action (Tacti-Vue and SlotVue) and offers solid documentation to enhance gameplay by offering substance, as well as flash.]*

## Strategy Game of the Year

Nominees for *CGW*'s **Strategy Game of the Year** are: *Koei* for **Genghis Khan**—Kou Shibusawa (producer), *Koei* for **Romance of the Three Kingdoms**—Kou Shibusawa (producer), *Maxis* for **SimCity**—Will Wright (designer), Scott Martindale, Don Bayless, and Will Wright (graphics), and Steve Hales and Will Wright (sound), *Mindscape* for **Balance of Power: 1990**—Chris Crawford (designer).

And the **WINNER** of *CGW*'s **Strategy Game of the Year** is:

Koei for *Romance of the Three Kingdoms—[Ed: Koei has created a fascinating genre which blends strategy, diplomacy, economic decision-making, role-playing, and history into an appealing and stimulating gaming experience.* Romance of the Three Kingdoms *epitomizes the depth of play and strategy of all Koei games and enables players to discover the roots of historical events by experiencing them rather than simply reading about them.]*

## Wargame of the Year

Nominees for **Wargame of the Year** are: *Panther Games* for **Fire Brigade**—Dave O'Connor and Tony Oliver (designers), *Strategic Simulations* for **Battles of Napoleon**—Chuck Kroegel and David Landrey (designers), *Strategic Simulations* for **Typhoon of Steel**—Gary Grigsby (designer), Dick Vohlers and Graeme Bayless (producers), and *Strategic Studies Group* for **Rommel: Battles for North Africa**—Roger Keating and Ian Trout (designers).

And the **WINNER** of *CGW*'s **Wargame of the Year** is:

Strategic Simulations for *Battles of Napoleon—[Ed: Although the system owes a heavy debt to SSI's popular American Civil War series, the care with which this program models the infantry formations and cavalry charges of the Napoleonic era, as well as the total constructability of the scenario editor, makes this a heavyweight title in its own right.]*

## 1989 Game of the Year

And now, the most exciting award of them all, *CGW*'s **Game of the Year**. And the **WINNER** is:

Maxis for *SimCity—[Ed: "They" told him it wouldn't sell, but Will Wright wouldn't give up his vision of a game that allowed the players to create their own urban environments.* SimCity *is a unique, dynamic toy which blends the best in strategy with the best in creativity. It models the reality well and challenges the player to grasp new concepts in a fascinating way.]*

Congratulations to all the winners and nominees. Keep them coming! **CGW**





Circle Reader Service #38

Circle Reader Service #39 »

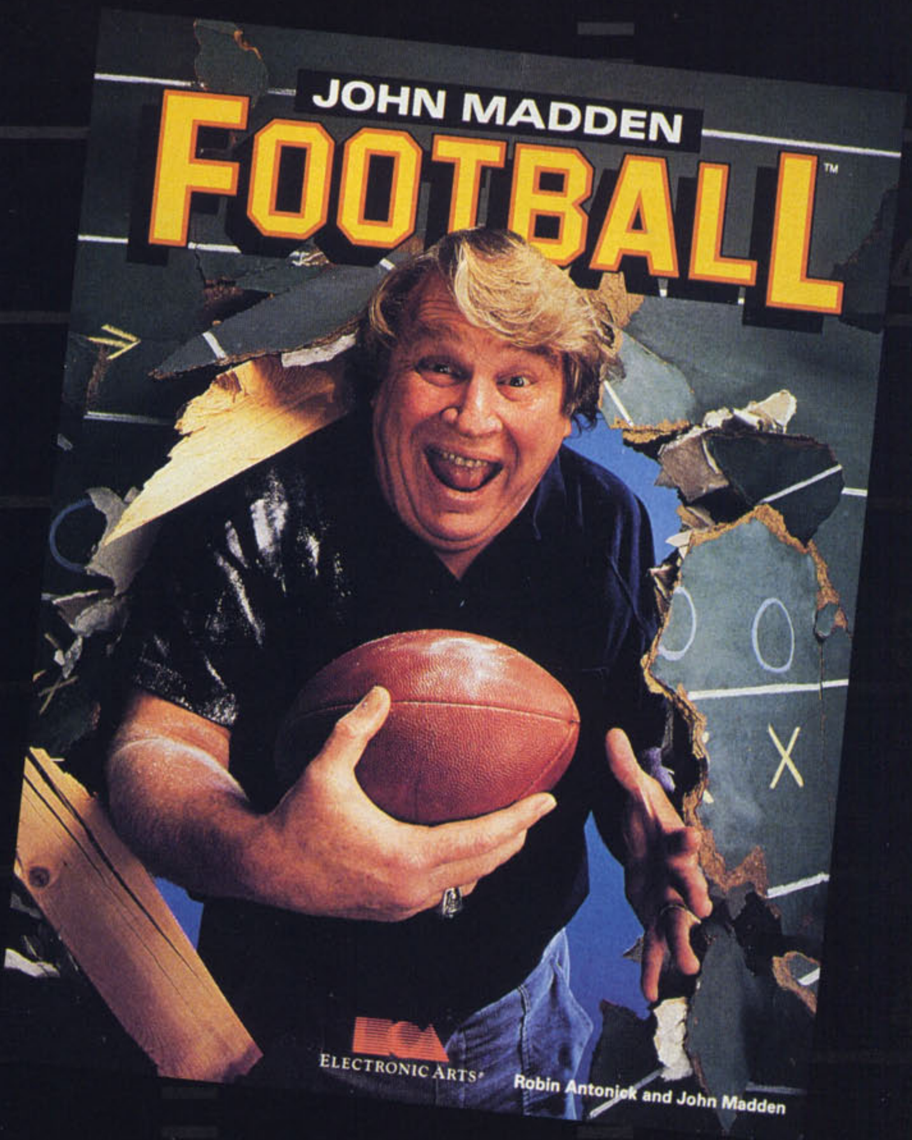
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*Circle Reader Service #41*

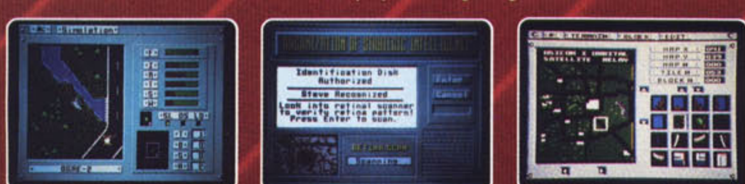



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(Continued from page 34)

# SPEEDBALL

problem in their current production and that any customers with problem disks can exchange them free of charge by sending them direct to **Cinemaware**.

## Listen to the Coach (Playing Tips)

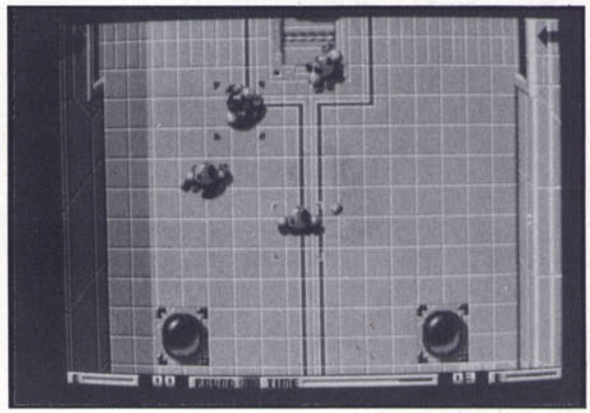
By moving and shooting diagonally you are a bit faster than the computer opponent (Remember that diagonal movement is accomplished on the keyboard by a double key press). Also note that by alternating left and right diagonal movement, you can "tack" along the field like a sailboat and easily elude the opposition. These techniques are important because teams at the higher levels will consistently outrun you on the straight-away.

Another useful tactic is tossing the ball to an oncoming blocker in order to set him up for an easy tackle and steal. Note that sometimes, Power Points can be worth more than a goal. A hard lob can put the ball past an opponent and enable you to grab a Power Point.

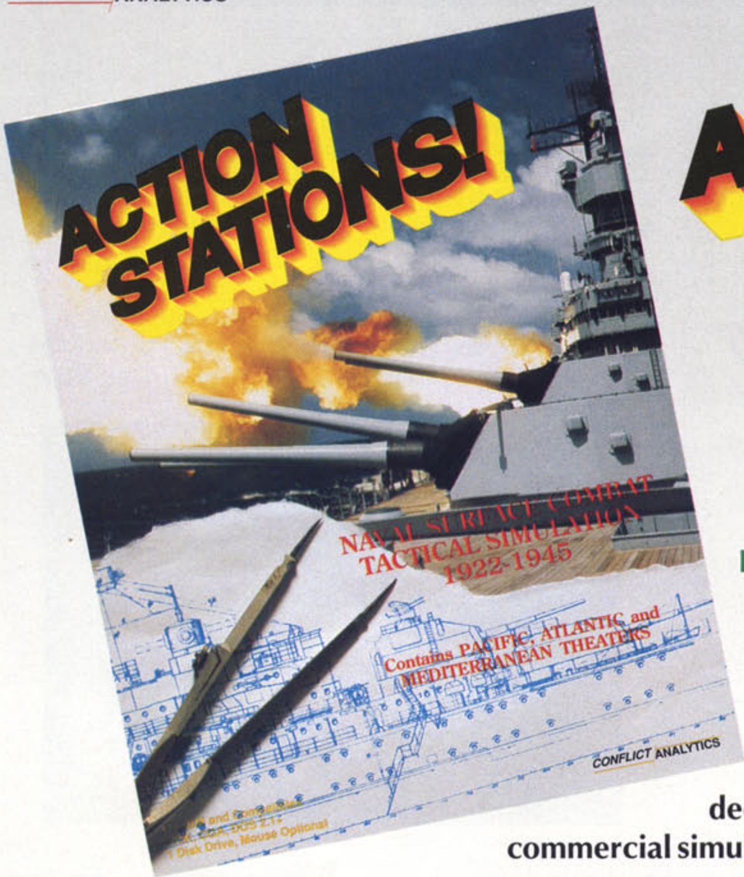
## DRAFT CHOICE (Conclusion)

*Speedball* is worthwhile and offers an underlying feel of reality beyond many action games. Most action fans will find it addictive.

**CGW**



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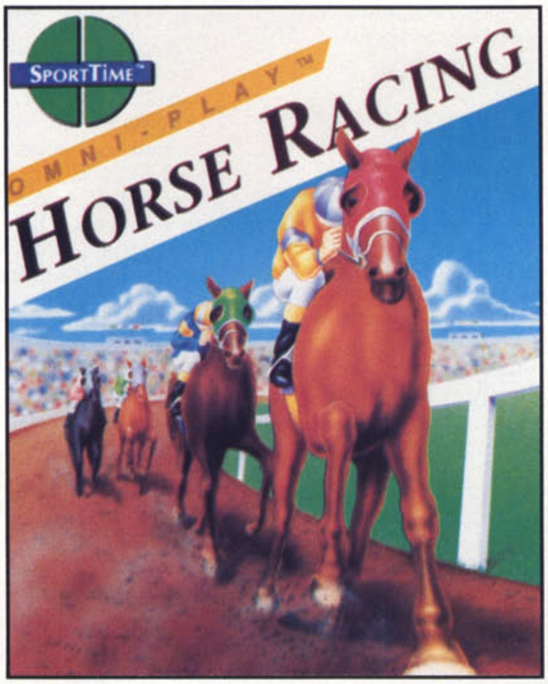
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# And . . . . They're Off !

## Sport Time's "Omni-Play Horse Racing"

*by Johnny L. Wilson*




| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Omni-Play™ Horse Racing |
| SYSTEM: | IBM |
| # PLAYERS: | 1-4 |
| PRICE: | $49.95 |
| DESIGNER: | Ed Ringler |
| PUBLISHER: | Sport Time<br>3187-G Airway Avenue<br>Costa Mesa, CA 92626 |

What's the matter? Down on your luck? Did your "sure thing" pull up lame on the back stretch? Was the "Exacta" bet spoiled by a 48-1 longshot? Did they pull the colors down on your first winner of the day after a steward's inquiry? Psst! Need a tip? Try *Omni-Play™ Horse Racing* (*HR*).

The creators of *Superstar Ice Hockey* and *Superstar Soccer* for **Mindscape** have created a unique horse racing game/system under their own label. The basic product is tremendous on its own merit, but the system allows the addition of expansion modules which make it a phenomenal game.

### You Can Bet On It (Strengths)

What makes *HR* tremendous? For one thing, the 128 horses in the database that comes with the game each have their own unique racing histories. Not only can a handicapper examine the past nine performances, but the database changes as the race meeting advances. Some earlier horse racing games did this much, but *HR* goes one better. Players have the option of keeping the records from game to game. This means that the way a horse ran the first time you played may be significant for the second and third times you play. *HR* also insures that a sprinter consistently performs like a sprinter and a distance runner performs like a distance runner. Not all of the earlier programs made this important distinction.

Also, *HR* takes into consideration the impact of the jockeys. There is a dynamic database that not only describes the jockey's past performances in terms of place positions, winning percentage, and "In The Money" percentage, but it also notes the current "mood" of the jockey. A jockey can be anywhere from being in his/her best form to being in his/her worst slump. Monitoring jockey moods and results enables the would-be handicapper to cash in on a particular jockey's "hot streak".

Where earlier games may have ignored the importance of post position, *HR* takes this matter seriously. That is important because it is extremely exhausting for horses to come across the track from the outside post position and still finish strong. Horses that run from the inside positions are automatically "saving ground" (i.e. not having to run as far). Therefore, *HR* offers a dynamic statistical summary of how the "favorites" from past races have performed throughout the meeting from the various post positions. This summary allows would-be bettors to track the effect of post position on order of finish.

Further, even when the player is playing solitaire, he/she is competing against up to 19 software-driven experts with their own betting styles. Players can access the database of computer bettors and note how much risk a given competitor takes, as well as the computer bettors winning percentage and current bankroll. If things aren't going well, the player can even "purchase" a tip from one of the computer bettors.

The animated sequences which show the stretch runs on both the back stretch and home stretch offer extremely realistic views. However, unlike earlier games where players must watch the races all the way through, even when their horse is out of the running by the clubhouse turn, *HR* has a number of options to speed up the game. Players can turn off the detailed animation and watch arabic numerals move swiftly around the track, advance all action to the home stretch, or proceed swiftly to the tote board, disabling all animation. This enhances play considerably.

The "photo finish" option was well conceived. Not only can players review the close finishes of the horses in the money, but any position can be reviewed. When a photo finish is selected, the program enlarges the image of the horses involved and displays the result on the screen. It is impressive.

Finally, the program is impressive because of its modular construction. Not only does the "Handicapper's Tournament" (which is included in the basic package) offer more than any horse racing simulation to date, but the add-on modules insure that the game will have a long play life. Tired of betting on the horses? The "Stable Owners" Module (Now Available—$19.95) lets you decide which horses will run and how far. Want to try your hand as a jockey? The "Jockey Competition" (Late 1989—$19.95) should do it. Want to match up the great horses from history? A "Historical Racing" (Early 1990 - $19.95) module will grant the opportunity. Ready to hit the real track? A "Prediction Analysis" (Late 1989—$19.95) may meet your needs. Further modules will enable players to compete against

other players in a networked betting competition and networked stable owners competition.

## Carrying Extra Weight (Weaknesses)

Even a program as tremendous as *Omni-Play Horse Racing* is bound to have some weaknesses, however. The first weakness extends strictly to the basic product. *HR* uses an unsettling mixture of EGA and CGA graphics for the animation on Track 1 (the basic data disk). One screen offers a sixteen-color palette and the next screen assaults one's senses with that sickening CGA green/orange palette. Also, all horses are bay in color. Fortunately, Track 2 offers the sixteen-color palette throughout and each horse has a distinguishing color. The races are, as a result, easier to follow and more interesting.

Other weaknesses involve the interface. One problem surfaces whenever there is more than one player. Assume that Player 1 has placed all of his bets at the betting screen. Then, Player 2 calls up his name and starts to place a bet. Player 2 needs to check on a past performance by one of the horses. If he backs out of the betting screen, checks the past performances screen, and returns to the betting screen, he should be able to immediately place his bet. Unfortunately, doing so places the bet for Player 1. Anytime a player other than Player 1 leaves the betting screen and returns, he must reselect his name. It would have been very easy to simply toggle Player 1 off after he placed his bets.



*The betting screen is straightforward and designed primarily for joystick input.*

Related to this problem is that of handling the tips which players can purchase from the other computer bettors. For example, Player 1 purchases a tip from "Trackman" and places a bet based on the tip. If he does not specifically scroll through the other horses and possible bets prior to exiting the betting screen, the tip will be there waiting for Player 2. This problem is easier to work around than the screen always resetting to Player 1, but it is an annoyance nonetheless.

Another interface matter that could have made the game more user-friendly would have been an "Across The Board" bet. As the current betting module stands, one must place separate "Win", "Place", and "Show" bets in order to place equivalent amounts "Across The Board". It would have been much easier to place all of these bets in one selection, just like at the track window.

Another feature that would have been extremely useful is due in a future module. The company will market a

separate "Print Utility" so that players can print out any screen data that they want. It would save a considerable amount of time to have past performances, jockey records, and post position records available without having to scroll through dozens of screens.

Finally, there will be some who will quibble that the selection of exotic bets in *Omni-Play Horse Racing* is too limited. Frankly, with the traditional "Win, Place, and Show" combined with three different kinds of "Exacta" bets (normal, double, and box) and two different kinds each of "Quinella" and "Triple" bets (normal and box), there is plenty of action for anyone.

### The Post Parade (Game Mechanics)

The game mechanics are simple with an amazing number of options. In the "Handicapper's Tournament", for example, there are three different possible victory conditions: 1) first player to a user-specified money level; 2) player with the most money after betting a user-specified number of races; or 3) player with most money after a certain number of races have been run. In addition, players can erase the records of all the horses and jockeys and start over or add a new player at any point. One can even set the number of simulated days for the race meeting and the number of races per "day".

Once the options have been set, players are free to browse through the menus and screens that describe past performances of each jockey and horse. By observing the distance run, the statistics recorded, the speed rating, and the track conditions, the player/bettor should gain some idea of how each horse performs in terms of the variables which the program utilizes (Acceleration, Top Speed, Kick (the speed at which a horse finishes a race), Endurance, and Track Condition).

The speed rating for each past performance is handled quite well. It is measured in fifths of a second off the winning horse's pace. Therefore, if a horse is running in the high 90s, handicappers know that the horse was extremely competitive in the race. If a horse is running at a low speed rating, one knows that the horse was way out of contention. For horses that win, the past performances chart tells players the "Margin" the horse won by, whether by a head (HD), neck (NK), or a nose (NO).

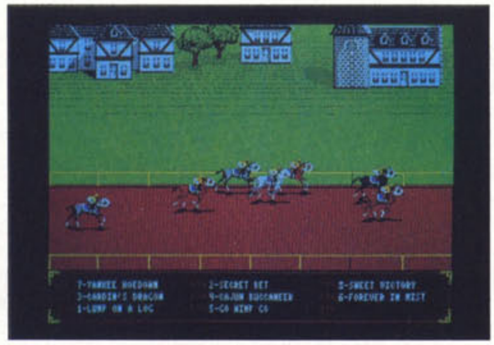
At this point in time, players can purchase a tip from their computer competitors (up to 19 different characters) or simply move on to the betting screen. After the bets are placed, the race is run with all the available options described above. Upon completion of the race, the toteboard is displayed and the photo finish can be accessed. After that, it's check the cash, handicap the next race, and try again.

### The Ultimate Gamble ("Stable Owners")

The "Stable Owners" module is even more exceptional than the basic program. The module takes into account the characteristics of the horses, the different types of races available (in ascending order—Frequency, Maiden, Open,

The jockey screen allows players to quickly evaluate which jockeys are on hot streaks and which are not.



"It's Yankee Hoedown by a nose; Cardin's Dragon is second; and Lump On A Log to show!" The Track 2 module has EGA color throughout.

Claiming, Allowance, and Stakes), the current attributes of the jockeys, and (if the player is using the optimal difficulty level) the way the stable owner cycles his/her horses.

Stable owners can allow the computer to automatically select the horses in their stable or go through an auction procedure. The "Auction" is really more like a draft than an auction. Each stable selects a horse in turn and there really isn't any auctioning to it. This may be just as well, however, because there is plenty to look at in considering which horse to take and it takes a while to make the choices. If a player gets tired of choosing for himself, there is an "Auto"-select command which can be accessed at any time.

When the "Stable Owners" tournament begins, the options are set similar to the "Handicapper's Tournament". Each "day" of the meet, the player/owner(s) must decide which horses to run in which races before *any* of the day's races are actually "run".

Here are a few tips on making these decisions. First, note which horses are sprinters, medium, and classic distance runners. Second, compare the fastest horses scheduled to run in the race at a preferred distance and enter faster horses if possible (It isn't always!). Third, make certain that you are resting your horses properly. Fourth, *always* check the times of the opposing horses before the actual race and don't be afraid to scratch horses (i.e. take them out of a given race), particularly if the entry fee is steep and you find that you are a heavy longshot.

Cycling one's horses properly works as follows. If the simulated race meeting features eight races per day, every horse in the stable should run every fourteenth race (i.e. run one, rest thirteen). If this is possible, the horse will run at 100% effectiveness. Of course, the fourteenth race will not necessarily be at a distance that, a given horse can run at its best. Therefore, the stable owner may choose to wait a race or two in order to enter a race that particular horse is more likely to win. Naturally, there is a performance penalty for each race run before or after the optimal number. (-5%, -10%, -16%, -21%, and all the way to 75% off a given horse's effectiveness).

Although actual race horses do not usually race this often, the simulation uses this constraint to offer some of the kinds of training decisions which owner/trainers must consider. This strategic element to planning a racing schedule adds an incredible amount of fun and realism to the game.

In order to keep track of the race/rest period, as well as keep track of performances, players may find that it is useful to create a worksheet for each horse (see sample). This will enable a player/owner to ascertain the readiness/effectiveness of his/her stable at a glance.

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Name of Horse | | Race # | Track | Length | Time | Jockey | Result |
| 2 | Keep The Peace | | 1 | F | 9.00F | 1:57.2 | Shancez | 1st |
| 3 | Keep The Peace | | 13 | F | 2.75F | 0:35.0 | Santigo | 1st |
| 4 | Keep The Peace | | 29 | M | 1.00M | 1:38.4 | Alomar | 3rd |
| 5 | Keep The Peace | | 42 | | | | | |
| 6 | Keep The Peace | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Keep The Peace | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Keep The Peace | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Keep The Peace | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Lovely Queen | | 12 | F | 9.00F | 2:01.4 | Perez | 7th |
| 11 | Lovely Queen | | 30 | M | 9.00F | 1.55.3 | Perez | 7th |
| 12 | Lovely Queen | | 43 | | | | | |
| 13 | Lovely Queen | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Lovely Queen | | | | | | | |
| 15 | Lovely Queen | | | | | | | |
| 16 | Lovely Queen | | | | | | | |
| 17 | Lovely Queen | | | | | | | |
| 18 | Pretty Sexy | | 4 | F | 2.75F | 0:37.3 | Shancez | 4th |
| 19 | Pretty Sexy | | 24 | F | 7.00F | 1:34.4 | Alomar | 6th |

*This worksheet can be swiftly prepared on any spreadsheet software and should help stable owners to cycle their horses more effectively. The worksheet should leave enough space for the results of each race which the horse will run in the course of an entire race meeting (horses will run approximately every other simulated day). The sample worksheet reflects a 10 day meeting with eight races per day. At the start of each simulated day, the owner can access the worksheet, note which horses need to run on that day, and enter them in races which maximize their abilities. Note: You will not always be able to put horses in ideal races, but you should enter horses in races in as close to optimal intervals as possible (i.e. every 13 races in an eight race per day meeting). You may find that keeping track of some factors, such as which jockey was riding the horse, is superfluous for your considerations. Simply adapt your worksheet to fit your style.*

In addition to the possible victory conditions where one stable reaches a certain cash level first or a stable has the most cash at the end of the meeting, the "Stable Owners" module has another possible victory condition. Under this stipulation, players play to win the Sport Time Derby. Would-be owners must have their horses perform well enough to be "invited" to compete in the nine horse field of the most prestigious stakes race in the meeting and must have them rested enough to participate at top form when the race cycles around. Just in case the player hasn't done well, however, there is a "Wildcard" race that even allows the lowest ranking stables to attempt to win a spot in the Sport Time Derby.

## The Finish Line (Conclusion)

*Omni-Play™ Horse Racing* is an excellent simulation of the Sport of Kings. The number of variables factored into each race and the entertainment value provided put this product into the "Winner's Circle".

**CGW**



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# RISKY BUSINESS

*By David M. Wilson*

Publishing a computer adaption of a classic boardgame is not without risks (no pun intended). Players will always be comparing the product to the tabletop version and unless the software package utilizes options unavailable in the board version, the game will likely be perceived as a failure. **Leisure Genius** seems willing to take the challenge and offer the computerized version of **Parker Brother**'s classic game of world conquest, *Risk*™.

Perhaps the most attractive option of the game is the fact that the game can be played solitaire. Not only can a single player battle the computer head-to-head for global domination, but he can also tell the computer-opponent what skill level to play. This is especially helpful for those who wish to use the software to sharpen their skills in preparation for tabletop tournaments.

*Risk*™, for those unfamiliar with the boardgame, is a wargame that, unlike others, doesn't concern itself too deeply with matters such as terrain and movement. It is not meant to be a serious simulation of global warfare, but rather a strategic meeting of opponents on a simplified scale. The game could be called a global chess game that calls for basic strategy and a little bit, or maybe a lot, of Lady Luck.

Play begins with selection of territories. Each player, in turn, selects one of the forty-two available territories. When all of the territories are claimed, each player selects a territory for his armies to occupy and reinforces it. This is, by far, the most tedious portion of the game. Nevertheless, this initial set-up can strongly affect the outcome of the game, so players should lend close attention.

When there are two players, the computer will generate a neutral player that acts as a buffer between the two. This gives a balance to the game because both players will be seeking control of the neutral ground as well as attempting to overcome one another's armies.

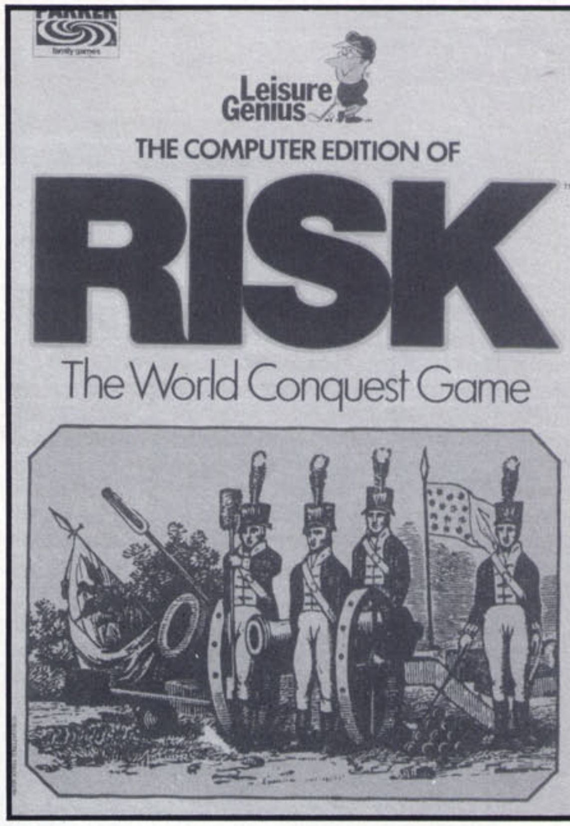
Play moves only a little faster after the initial setup. Players will reinforce countries on each turn with new armies. The number of new armies is based on the amount of territories the player occupies. Players then may attack another player's territory or move troops to adjacent territories.

Since the majority of the battle's outcome is determined by the random roll of dice, attacking involves planning, *and* luck. As in the boardgame, players may roll one, two or three dice. The more dice the defending player rolls increases his chance to win the battle, but also increases the number of armies he may lose in the battle. So, the player must decide how many armies he is willing to risk.

Sometimes, of course, a player should not attack. The urge to conquer must be balanced by reasonable thought. Inaction is often the wisest action. Otherwise, the armies can spread themselves too thinly to be efficient.

Players earn "Risk" cards at the end of every turn in which they capture an opposing territory. Sets of these cards may be traded for reinforcements. A set of cards is one of each type: Cavalry, Artillery and Infantry. A set can also be completed with a wild card. There are only two wild cards in the deck. On each occasion that a player turns in a set of cards, the number of reinforcements increases. So, it is clear that players should often wait for their opponents to turn in cards, so that will increase the number of reinforcements when they turn in their cards on a later turn.

The game's overall graphics are nice, with one drawback. Players cannot view the entire world situation at a glance. The world map *can* be viewed in its entirety, but takes a long time to be retrieved from the disk and doesn't show the strength in each occupied territory. Although this is undoubtedly due to the limitations of the machine, it is an inconvenience. Instead, players may view only one section at a time. This greatly takes away from the playability of the game, because players are having to scroll through the different sections of the map to find the territory he is seeking.




Play may be accomplished using either joystick, keyboard or both. In a two-player game, we found that it was easier for one to use the keyboard while the other used the joystick, instead of passing the joystick back and forth or changing seats for keyboard position.

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Risk™ |
| SYSTEMS: | C-64/128 |
| # PLAYERS: | 1-6 |
| PRICE: | $29.99 |
| DESIGNERS: | Gang Of Five |
| PUBLISHER: | Leisure Genius<br>Virgin Mastertronic<br>Costa Mesa, CA |

Game play can be modified for several variants. A shorter than average game is played with each player having a set number of headquarters and is over when one player captures all of his opponent's territories.

The "UK Variant" lets the computer randomly choose territories for each player. This allows the initial setup of the game to be quicker. In the UK standard game each player is dealt a mission card. The player wins the game by fulfilling the mission described on the card.

*(Continued on page 58)*

# THE KRISTAL

## Cinemaware's Latest Import

*by Roy Wagner*




| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | The Kristal |
| SYSTEM: | Amiga |
| PRICE: | $49.95 |
| DESIGNERS: | Prism Leisure Corp. |
| PUBLISHER: | Cinemaware<br>Westlake Village, CA |

Even the best of studios have an occasional bad release. Such is the case with **Cinemaware**, that top-ranked producer of such great action hits as *Defender of the Crown, Rocket Ranger, The Three Stooges* and *Lords of the Rising Sun*. Even their "B" release, *S.D.I* was not bad and they wisely added a new **Spotlight** label to release many of their "B" products, usually titles with hot graphics from the European market. In fact, one wonders why *The Kristal* was not released under the **Spotlight** label, since it was originally produced in Europe, as well.

Frankly, this reviewer believes that even **Cinemaware**'s description of this game on the box stretches the reality of the game. In order to review this game, one *must* address this product description. The italicized sentences in the remainder of this article are taken directly from the package.

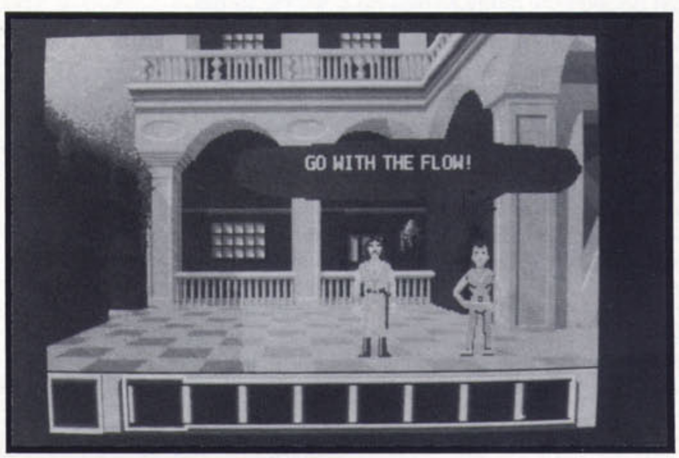
*Become Dancis Frake, swashbuckling space pirate, in this epic quest to find the fabled Kristal of Konos and return it to its rightful resting place.*

Nothing wrong there. That pretty much sums up the premise of this game. The story behind the game originated as a British play, but even as a play, it must have had a short life. The game requires you to fly to several planets (10 provided) to find the items necessary to complete your quest. In doing so, you must kill off a similar set of aliens who happen to be in orbit around each planet you attempt to land on and try to prevent you from actually getting to the planet. If you get past the first wave of aliens, you will face a second wave before you can reach the planet. On many planets, you must also win a sword fight before you can wander about and explore. Both of these "arcade" sequences are frustratingly difficult, particularly because of slow and uneven joystick response.

*You'll battle ruthless villains, woo a beautiful princess, and interact with strange, alien life forms.*

Ruthless is right! To succeed in any sword fight you must learn to skillfully orchestrate the sixteen different moves your joystick provides. Granted that you probably need to really learn only a few good moves, but the responses seem delayed and the "actions" are difficult to identify.

Fortunately, walking about and interacting with alien life forms is somewhat interesting. This game gave me the feeling of a **Cinemaware** version of *Ultima*. Your character can wander horizontally across the screen and also move "into" the screen, getting smaller to simulate depth as he does so. As for interac-



tion, when Dancis Frake encounters another "alien" character, a text window permits him to carry on a conversation. The purpose of the interaction, of course, is to obtain specific information necessary to complete his quest. In *The Kristal*, one has to interrogate *everyone* Dancis Frake runs into. You never really know what to say and you usually end up using the same set of questions with everyone you meet. To me, that's too much rote drudgery. And what if you don't think to ask that "key" question? So much for interaction. Also, as with many games of this type, there are *many* red herring. I, for one, have never enjoyed sorting fish.

*The Kristal displays incredibly lifelike animation and gorgeous graphics.*

Frankly, the graphics in *The Kristal* are *not* state of the art for the Amiga. They are interesting in spots, but this reviewer has seen better on a Commodore 64.

*The multi-disk, role-playing universe features an interrogative parser and real-time action.*

In fact, the game has *four* 880K disks for the Amiga version. Fortunately, I have three drives. Even then, the game will access two of them, just to return to ship. Further, whenever it was time to save a game, it would only write one save to any one particular disk and that particular disk had to be in your zero drive.

The parser for text input seemed good, but it had a limited number of phrases that it would repeat when it didn't understand what you entered. That limitation starts to wear on you as the game progresses.

*Fiendish puzzles, brilliant character interaction, and amazing arcade-style sequences combine to provide the ultimate challenge to all of your game-playing skills.*

This reviewer actively attempts to stay away from any game that uses the word "fiendish" in its description. If "fiendish" happens to be paired with the word "puzzle", players are destined for frustration. "Fiendish puzzles" translates to, "No one found this game easy". Further, as noted earlier, the interaction was rather lackluster and pretty much two dimensional.

The "amazing arcade-style sequences" were amazingly crude and frustrating. Again, the translation of "ultimate challenge" may mean more precisely, "Nearly impossible to master". It certainly doesn't mean "fun"! I don't know what the arcades are like in England, but fortunately the types of sequences utilized in this game have not been widely imported into America.

The documentation is adequate. It includes a few helpful tips and a walkthru to get you started. However, the first time I played, the events indicated in the walkthru did not occur. Naturally, this greatly confused my first encounter. Fortunately, additional help is available by calling **Cinemaware** and they may even send you a *much needed* set of hints. The interface is obtuse. This is the first game that I have ever seen that uses the number pad to request saving/restoring a game. The opening scenes are quite impressive, but the game itself is only for a few diehard gamers.

These comments are those of the reviewer, but this game has left a similar impression with all to whom I have shown the game. *The Kristal* is virtually unplayable except to the master arcade gamers that might have the time and patience for the "challenge".

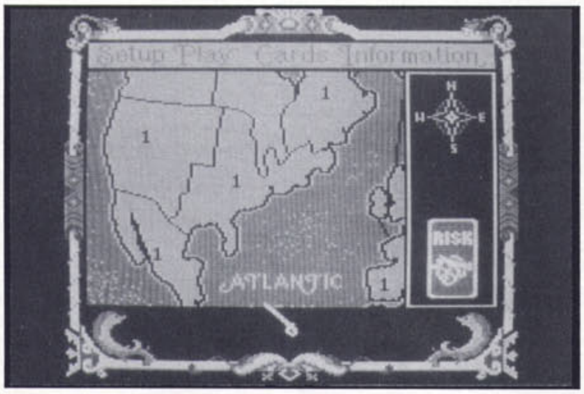
For the average gamer, this show is not worth the price of admission.

**CGW**

(Continued from page 55)

# RISK

The accompanying game manual seems disorganized, jumping from topic to topic with each detail of the game instead of dealing in order. However, it has an index at the end to help players locate specific information. The manual also seems to be incomplete in some areas. Some sections of the manual refer players to another section and fail to list the page numbers. For example, under the heading of "Fixed Set Value/Rising Set Value", the manual says, "The value that a set of cards are worth when exchanged for armies (See pages )." This page omission is repeated from page 20 on. Somebody didn't do a good job of proofreading the manual.

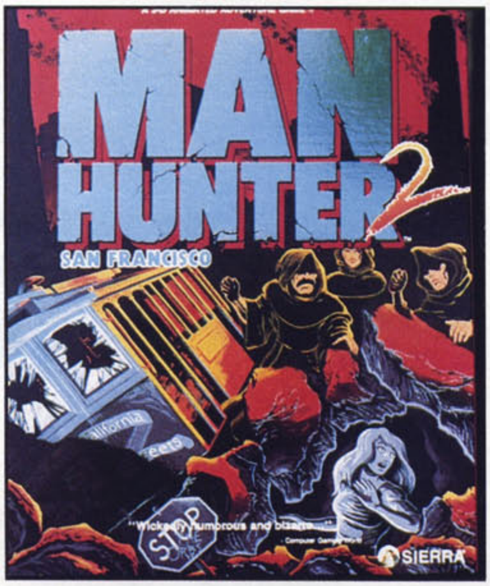



For most players, the boardgame itself would probably be more fun, especially with a number of players because they won't have to all crowd around your computer monitor. The broader view of the tabletop version makes strategies easier to plot and reconnaissance of the enemy's movement simpler. Still, the variations are useful for a change of pace and the game does provide some fun against a computer opponent when you can't get the whole gang together. After all, that really is the purpose for computerizing board games, isn't it? **CGW**



# MAN HUNTER 2 SAN FRANCISCO

*by Scorpia*




| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Manhunter 2: San Francisco |
| SYSTEMS: | IBM |
| REVIEWED ON: | IBM |
| PRICE: | $49.95 |
| DESIGNERS: | Dave & Barry Murry |
| PUBLISHER: | Sierra<br>Coarsegold, CA |

You thought life was tough in New York. First, the orbs invaded and took over everything. Then, they grabbed you and made you a Manhunter. Why? Who knows?! Maybe it was just your lucky day. After that, things got really interesting: what with mine fields in Central Park, robots in Bellevue, bodies showing up in unexpected places, and some nut running around carving his initial on the corpses. Before long, you found yourself in an alien spaceship, which you could barely operate, chasing that selfsame nut (Phil, by name) across the country. Now, you're about to find out just how tough life can really be . . .

As you've already figured out, *Manhunter 2: San Francisco* picks up where the previous game left off. The long chase across the continent ends with your ship crashlanding on a San Francisco street, plunging you into another bizarre escapade full of bodies, puzzles, and warped humor. It's almost like being back home again in New York . . . *almost.*

This time, it's worse! You're in a strange city where you haven't the least idea of what is going on, except for a deep suspicion it's something nasty. No one's going to help you, of course, and those who might be able to provide some clues have the unfortunate tendency to turn up dead, often horribly so. In fact, this game is rather more gruesome than the last one, and might well have been titled, "Manhunter 2: Choice Cuts". Let's hope you have a strong stomach.

The basic set-up and interface of the game is the same as it was in *Manhunter: New York*. Almost everything is controlled from a joystick or keypad. Aside from the few occasions where names have to be typed in, the keyboard is hardly used at all. Travel is as quick and easy as before: just move the marker to where you want to be and poof! . . . you're there.

Also, as before, you have to view every screen with extreme care, and move the cursor over each part of it, so you don't miss an important clue or item. This is very important when trying to figure out people's names. Objects in the inventory are used by highlighting them on the inventory screen. Usually, if the particular object has no use in a situation, nothing happens except a picture of it is displayed.

On those unfortunate occasions when you meet an unpleasant fate (namely, a grisly death), the game automatically backs you out to just before your demise to give you another chance. Even so, and particularly with arcade sequences, there may be times when you can't get away from the situation entirely. Therefore, saving before doing anything potentially dangerous is a good idea.

Saving and restoring, by the way, is quick and you can save virtually anywhere, including during arcade sequences. This is quite helpful at times, especially when going through the lava maze (see below). There are only twelve slots for saving, but you can create (on the IBM) additional subdirectories for save games if you need them.

The one big change, and a very good one, is the introduction of variable difficulty levels for the arcade sequences. YAY! For those people (like me!) who grit their teeth over arcades in an adventure game, this is a welcome addition. By allowing the player to choose difficulty level, the Murrys have managed to please just about everyone (even me!). The "Easy" level is, indeed easy, and makes most of the sequences a breeze. You can zip through them and get back to the good stuff without wasting too much time.

So, what's *Manhunter 2: San Francisco* all about? Ah, that would be telling! After all, a large part of the game revolves around discovering, little by little, just what is going on here. Ostensibly, you're still trying to track down the vicious Phil from New York. You know he's here, especially after a few corpses with a "P" carved on the forehead start showing up.

However, other bodies (and parts of bodies) abound, and not all of them are Phil's work. It helps to have a scorecard handy so you can figure out who is doing what to whom and for what reasons. For instance, the dead men with the dragon tattoos: whose side are they on? And that corpse in the doctor's home, why is he wearing a gray robe? And what happened to his other arm (it's not attached anymore)?

Add in, among other things, vicious dobermans, carnivorous ratmen, necrophiliac shopkeepers, opium dens, a new breed of Orb (not only two eyes, but a whole face!), mysterious doings at the Ferry, a few assorted ninja, and cryptic references to Hell, and you have quite a bit to sort out.

In fact, it almost seems more than a poor ex-Manhunter can handle. Especially one who would probably prefer not to get involved anyway, after all the doings back in New York.

Overall, Manhunter 2 was a little easier than the previous game. This is probably due to being more experienced with the style of play and graphic clues that make

up much of the investigative work needed to complete the game. On the other hand, the story line here is more involved and complex than in the original Manhunter, and in some ways more satisfying, even though not all your questions may be answered as to what is happening.

The arcades are a mixture of old and new. Most were fun (kinda), but the lava maze was definitely tiresome. It was done as tunnels back in Manhunter: New York, and that was enough. It's time for something new in the end game; the creative talent that has so far produced two very original games can surely come up with something a little more imaginative.

Humor of the twisted sort abounds as before, but the series appears to be heading into more morbid channels. Aside from the higher body count, mutilated bodies and parts of bodies seem to be everywhere. Some restraint is necessary here; after all, this is supposed to be a game, not a slasher flick. Which is not to say that the game is totally revolting (it certainly isn't), but better to stop this unpleasant trend before it goes too far.

The manual is on the skimpy side, telling you just the bare essentials necessary to get started. There is a short walkthru in the back, which takes you through some of the opening action; if you've not played the previous Manhunter, you might want to look at it to get some idea of how this game operates.

Bottom line: Somewhat on the gruesome side, and therefore not for everyone, but otherwise an excellent followup to the previous game; a definite "must have" for Manhunter fans.

## *Advice From An Experienced "Manhunter"*

**Warning: The following contains specific hints.**

Of course, it would help if you had something to work with. By an amazingly fortuitous coincidence, your spaceship just happened to land on top of another Manhunter. Splat! After leaving the ship (and noticing that the dead man does not wear ruby slippers), you can pick up the MAD (Manhunter Assistance Device) and ID card that, also by amazing fortune, didn't get caught underneath.

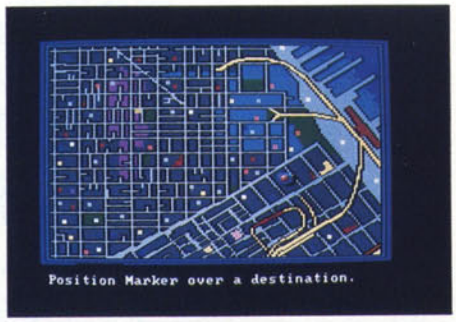
Now you're all set, because you can fake being the unfortunate person you just inadvertantly killed. The orbs aren't very bright in some matters, besides which they can't see your face under that hood anyway. As long as you respond properly at the right times, you can get away with your little masquerade.

Most of Day 1 is pretty straightforward. You won't be able to get into every place you visit, at least not immediately. Just remember that tomorrow is another day, and if you can't enter a location at the moment, you can always try again at another time.

However, both on this and the other days, it is important that you go to each new location, whether you can get in or not. The game is keeping track of where you've gone, and the current day will not end until you have been to all possible locations. Particularly when restoring, it is easy to forget that you haven't visited a place or two in the save game you just brought back. So make sure you know where you've been.

The only real problem you may have is at the Embarcadero Fountain. This is an arcade sequence. I reached it early on (after all, this is only the first day), and came to a screeching halt. For uncounted hours, I tried to get through the fountain. Whether I used the keypad or the joystick, I always ended up going down the drain. Literally.









Finally, I found out (after a frantic call to Sierra; reviewers have their privileges!) that all you need to use in this case is the Enter key. Just that, nothing else. What tripped me up here was some ambiguous wording in the manual.

The arcade sequences are normally set to hard mode. By hitting the escape key, you bring up the menu that changes the difficulty level, and hitting the enter key shuts the menu. Now, the manual says that after each arcade sequence, the difficulty is re-set to hard again. So, each time I went through the fountain, I was hitting escape to set the difficulty to easy, and enter to close the box on the screen.

What caused the problem was the notation at the bottom of the screen to "Hit Enter to spin out". I thought it meant to hit enter to clear the box and start the arcade sequence (because the game freezes while you set the difficulty).

This brought on a lot of frustration until I learned the truth, which was that (a) only Enter was needed and (b) the arcade level stays where you set it, however many times you have go through that particular sequence. Difficulty changes only when you go to a different arcade. I mention all this because I'm not the only one who was caught by this ambiguity, and it's a good idea to make sure none of you are, too.

The remaining arcades in the game are nowhere near as troublesome or confusing, just occasionally deadly (grin). The maze at the end *is* nasty, though. Yes, there is a maze in this game, as well. Those who have played the previous Manhunter will recall the joys of piloting the spaceship through the tunnels. This time, you can experience the joys of piloting a rocket around lava flows. It's about as much fun as it was before.

Day 2 is the tricky one. There is a lot of tracking to be done on MAD, and it must be done carefully to make sure you don't miss anyone. Replay the scenes on the computer as many times as you need to, taking notes of who is going where. It will all seem rather confusing at first, although as you visit the various locations, some of the action should become clearer.

Day 3, on the other hand, seems to be something of a stumper: you obtain only one new location from the tracker. Of course, you realize immediately this means that now you can go back to those places that were closed to you before and get into them, one way or another. It's just a matter of figuring out the correct order.

Certainly, Ghirardelli Square should be your first stop. However, I highly recommend saving the game before you do much snooping around here, especially on the roof. There was no way I could find of exiting the arcade sequence up there, except by going through it successfully. Since you don't have the right item to succeed, you probably don't want to get involved in climbing around any signs right away.

You may also want to avoid the window for the moment, especially if you happen to be carrying anything of a fragile nature. Indeed, the best thing is to take a quick peek around, then head off to other parts (with parts, haha) for awhile. After all, Ghirardelli Square and occupants aren't going anyplace; they will be there later.

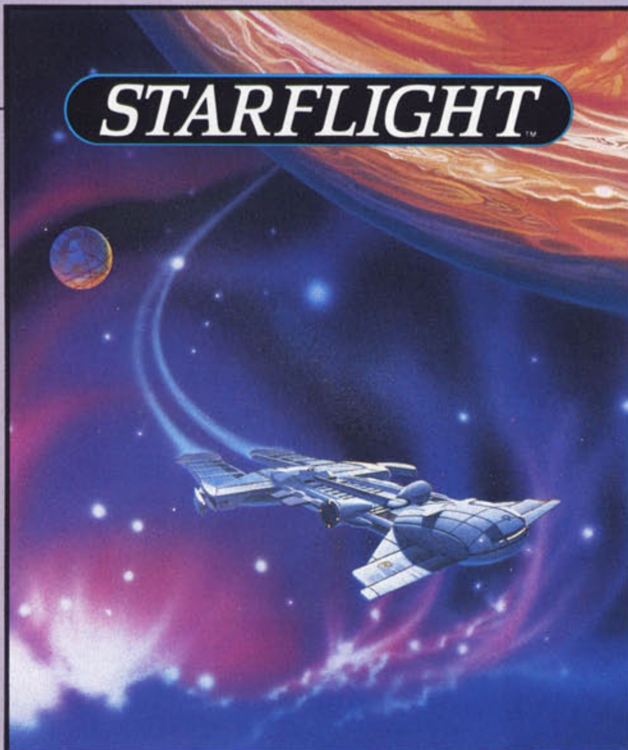
The most difficult task on this day is probably "down under", fiddling with the lava gates. The correct sequence of opening and closing them may take awhile to get exactly right. This is not an arcade sequence, so difficulty level does nothing for you here; it's strictly a logic puzzle. If you find yourself being zapped by robots, remember that the gates (even when closed) will not stop them. Also, keep in mind that the robots are coming from above, not below (that's a hint).

So, do you finally get Phil? Well, not quite, but you do get a bit closer to him. You even discover something about him that may be a revelation. However, exacting revenge for all his vile acts is going to have to wait until you reach wherever it is you're headed at the end of the game. Destination isn't specified, but you can bet it won't be anyplace congenial.



**CGW**

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(Continued from page 6)



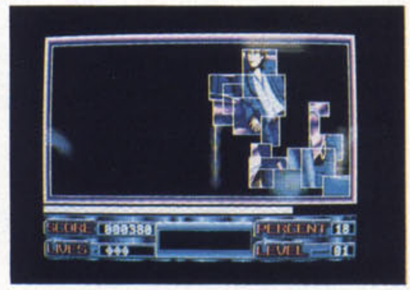
*Planet of Lust*




*Ancient Land of Ys*



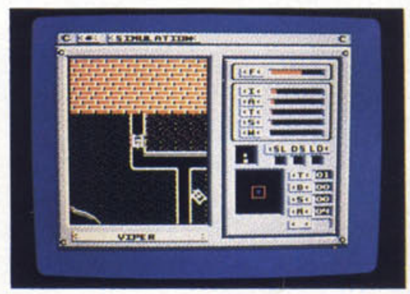

*Murder Club*



*Powerstyx*




*Gauntlet II*



*Omega*

orient the block you're working with, the farther into the pit it falls. So many blocks, so little time! IBM (39.95). Circle reader service #5.

## Data East
## 470 Needles Drive
## San Jose, CA 95112

**HEAVY BARREL**: Terrorists have captured a nuclear missile complex, dismantled the only weapon that can defeat them (the Heavy Barrel), and hidden the pieces in lockers strewn throughout the complex. One or two players must fight their way past tanks, over waterways and bridges, and through hordes of terrorists to find and reassemble the Heavy Barrel before successfully defeating the enemy. This game features typical arcade-quality action and graphics. IBM (pictured) ($39.95) & C-64 ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #6.

## Digitek Software
## 104 W. Seneca, Suite 4
## Tampa Florida 33612

**POWERSTYX**: Players must work against time to uncover the picture that lies behind the black computer screen. Parts of the picture become visible as portions of the screen are scribed with the cursor. Skulls, scissors and crosses chase the cursor along the scribed lines and the player must avoid them and reclaim the screen, or lose. This game is sort of like *Qix* with underlying graphics screens. Amiga ($14.95). Circle reader service #7.

## Free Spirit Software
## P.O. Box 128
## 58 Noble Street
## Kutztown, PA 19530

**PLANET OF LUST**: Brad Stallion and his rocket, the "Big Thruster", once again scour the galaxy in search of adventure. This time Brad must stop the nefarious Dr. Dildo from crushing the planet Erotiac with his impenetrable force field. This adult-rated adventure game has colorful graphics and lots of humor. Amiga ($39.95). Circle reader service #8.

## Kyodai
## 58 Mitchell Blvd.
## San Rafael, CA 94903

**ANCIENT LAND OF YS**: This neat little role-playing game (similar to *Prophecy*) was a #1 hit in Japan and comes overseas with attractive graphics and a smooth interface. Players battle the evil wizard Malificus to ultimately regain the six books of Ys and restore prosperity to the land. Players gain clues from NPC's, battle monsters, gain gold, weapons, and artifacts, while advancing in attributes. The usual fare, done with flair. IBM ($44.95). Circle reader service #9.

**MURDER CLUB**: In this mystery/adventure game players assume the role of a detective investigating the murder of Bill Robbins, a high-standing member of the community. As detective, players must question suspects, recover physical evidence, and obtain search and arrest warrants in forming a case which will both satisfy the DA and stand up in court. The program rates players on their gumshoing ability so that players can keep tabs on their progress. IBM ($39.95). Circle reader service #10.

## Mindscape
## 3444 Dundee Road
## Northbrook, IL 60062

**GAUNTLET II**: This sequel to *Gauntlet* adds over 100 new mazes, and allows players to join in at any time during play. Secret rooms, the magic potion of traps, monster generators, transporters, force fields, and the usual cast of villains all abound in this smooth playing, colorfully animated action game. Amiga (pictured), & ST ($49.95), C-64 ($29.95), & IBM ($39.95). Circle reader service #11.

(Continued on page 66)

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*(Continued from page 64)*

## Origin
## P.O. Box 161750
## Austin, Texas 78716

**OMEGA**: Join the ranks of cybertank engineers at the Organization of Strategic Intelligence assigned to the Omega project. From the futuristic, underground design facilities, engineers will attempt to design, test, and eventually perfect the ultimate cybertank. Building a cybertank chassis from a wide selection of tank equipment is only a minor step in the design of the ultimate tank, A tank's true strength lies in its artificial intelligence programmed by the engineer using an intuitive Pascal-like command language. Only a shrewd AI design and hours of testing in the battle simulation module will produce a fearsome battle-ready dreadnought which can be entered in a nationwide tournament sponsored by **Origin** and **CGW**. See Industry News for more details. Apple II (pictured), IBM, C-64, ST and Amiga ($49.95). Circle reader service #12.

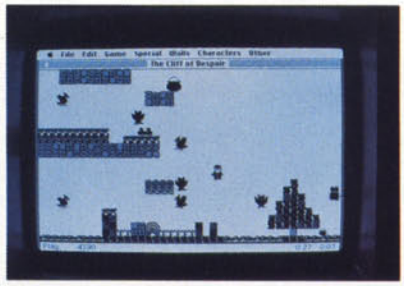
## Shodan
## P.O. Box 4456
## Berkeley, CA 94704

**LEPRECHAUN**: Aye friend, this be a deceptively challengin' action game for the Macintosh. Players must use their noggins to help a wee Leprechaun maneuver little pots o' gold over the rainbow, while avoiding lots o' deadly nasties. The game be includin a hundred scenarios and an editor so ye can make your own. Supports Mac II color, and that be no blarney. Mac ($59.00). Circle reader service #13.

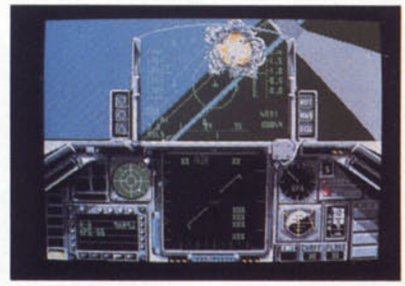
## Spectrum Holobyte
## 2061 Challenger Drive
## Alameda, CA 94501

**FALCON: OPERATION COUNTERSTRIKE**: Originally planned as a simple data disk with 12 new missions, Operation Counterstrike became almost a complete new version of the award winning *Falcon*. There are many improvements over the original program. In addition to new landscape, targets, and missions, the program has improved flight controls and easier landing modes (and the Mig pilots will no longer harass you on your way back to base). On the other hand, the enemy has upgraded their equipment from MiG-21s to MiG-29s (ouch!). Amiga (pictured) & Atari ST, 512K minimum, 1MB recommended. $24.95. Original game required. Circle reader service #14.

**VETTE**: Players race one of four different corvettes through the streets of San Francisco over a variety of courses in this hot driving simulation. Time pressure, obstacles (pedestrians, cop cars, trucks.....the Bay!), varying difficulty levels, buildings and landmarks, they're all here in an incredibly detailed simulation of driving through the City by the Bay. Watch out for Steve McQueen! IBM ($49.95). Circle reader service #15.



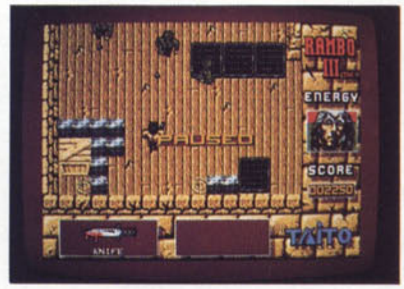
*Leprechaun*



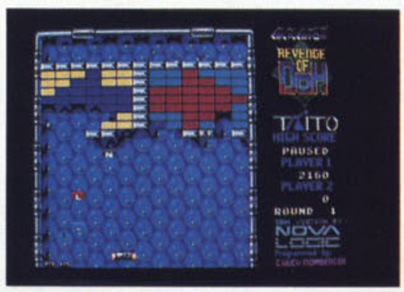
*Falcon*




*Vette*




*Rambo III*




*Arkanoid II*




*F-40 Pursuit*

## Taito
## 267 West Esplanade
## North Vancouver
## B.C., Canada V7M 1A5

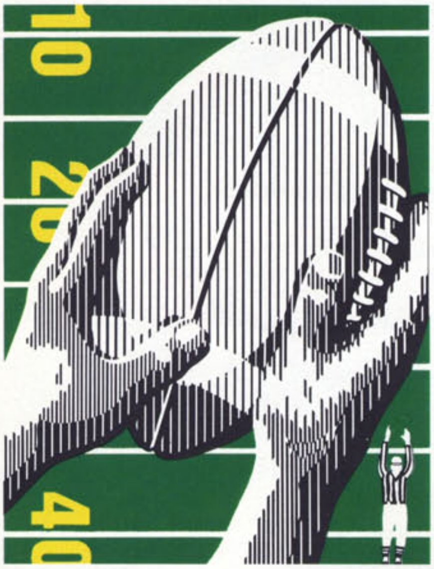
**RAMBO III**: From the wide screen to the computer screen, Rambo strides through a heavily guarded Soviet compound on the Afghanistan border, searching for Colonel Trautman. Players fight tanks, commandos and attack choppers in this fast moving, high-quality graphics, action game. ST (pictured) & C-64 ($29.95), Amiga ($34.95). Circle reader service #16.

**ARKANOID II: THE REVENGE OF DOH**: This sequel to *Arkanoid* comes with 67 new, complex barriers to breakthrough, and a construction kit that enables one or two players to design their own force barriers. AdLib support is one of the enhancements to the original classic. IBM (pictured) & Apple IIGS ($34.95), C-64 & ST ($29.95). Circle reader service #17.

## Titus Software
## 20432 Corisco St.
## Chatsworth, CA 91311

**F-40 PURSUIT SIMULATOR**: In this driving simulation/action game, players must outrun and outwit ol' smokey in an interstate car-chase spanning several midwestern states. Flooring the Ferrari F40 will rid players of a pesky cop on their tail, but only quick planning and liberal use of a scrolling highway map will avoid their interstate roadblocks. Amiga (pictured), ST & IBM ($44.95). Circle reader service #18.

(Continued from page 31)




on the IBM are outstanding and the game is expected to support both the **AdLib** and **Covox** sound boards.

Designed by Scott Orr, veteran sports game developer formerly with **Gamestar**, the game is being designed to be simpler to play than *TV Sports Football*. Modeled after the coin-op arcade style play, play selection and action will be joystick-driven




*Data East's ABC Monday Night Football*

and so intuitive that "coaches" should be able to play it without having to refer to the manual. Do not get the idea that the game will be a lightweight, though. The game will have a statistical base, as well as a Playmaker Utility which will allow eight plays to be saved and kept in memory. Unlike *PF*, *JMF*, or even *GY*, it should only take about five minutes for a "coach" to create a playbook.

Although the game will bear the title of *ABC Monday Night Football*, the basic game will *not* be packaged with an NFL data disk. Since the game will be designed in a modular fashion, this should not be difficult to add at a later date. Instead, the basic game will emphasize action over statistical/strategic decision-making.

**"It doesn't matter what the game plan is, the players have to execute in order to win."**

*MSFL Pro League Football* (*MSFL*—IBM, Macintosh, $49.95) from **Micro Sports, Inc.** was reviewed in *CGW* #55. The game offers a marvelous capacity for replaying entire seasons for statistical analysis and attempting "What if?" experiments with various game plans. The Game Plan generator asks 104 questions about one's coaching philosophy and develops a game plan from the answers. Like *Playmaker Football* (*PF*), the game's AI makes it an ideal game for running leagues. The AI is considerably different than that in *PF*, however. Where *PF* allows "coaches" to customize each individual play by potential game situation, *MSFL* emphasizes a basic coaching direction. *MSFL* is easier to implement for NFL statistical replays for that reason.

The interesting fact about *MSFL* is that there are regular leagues run via **Compuserve**'s *Modem Gamers' Challenge Board*. Dave Holt (76702,332), designer of *MSFL* is the league's commis-

(Continued on page 69)

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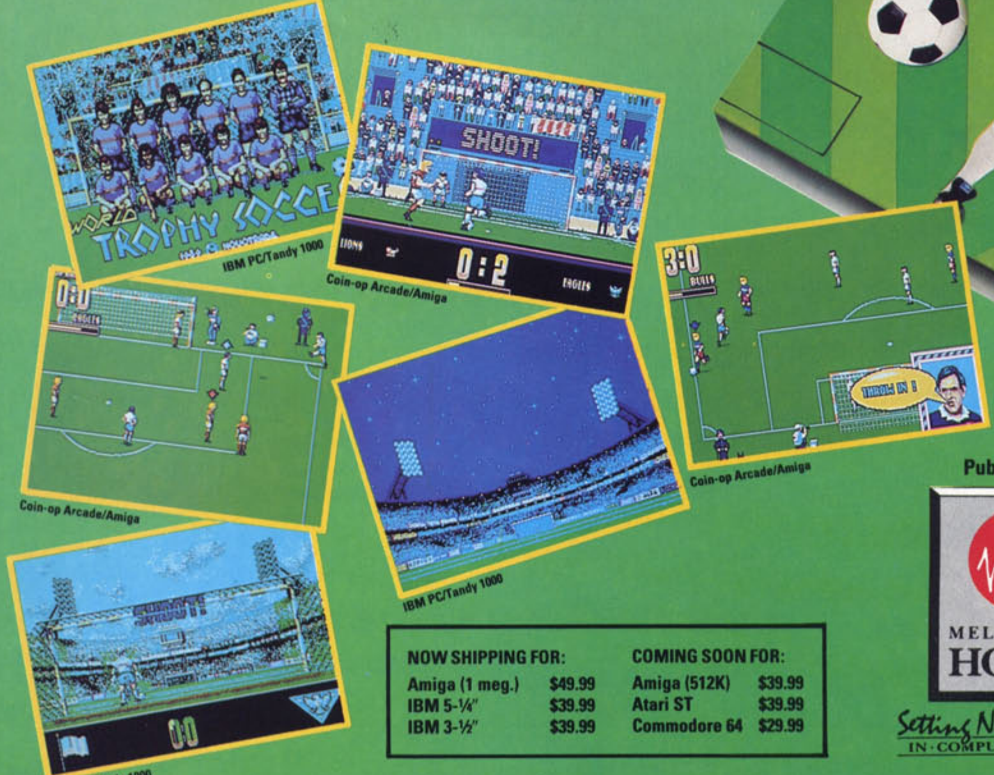
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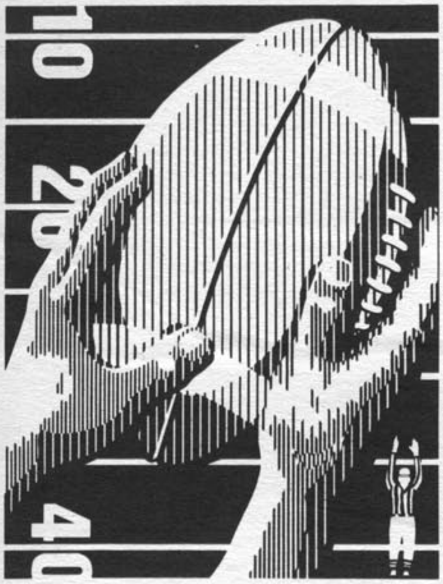
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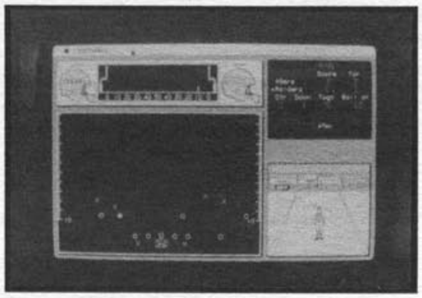
18001 Cowan
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 833-8710

(Continued from page 67)



sioner and he will assist interested "coaches" who want to participate in either Macintosh or IBM leagues.

For those looking for an action game or even an action/strategy game, *MSFL* is too strategy-oriented. For those who want solid statistics, challenging strategy, nice graphics, and a potential for league play all rolled into one, *MSFL* is an excellent choice.



*Micro Sports' MSFL Pro League Football*

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Finally, at the risk of repeating standard information *ad infinitum*, "coaches" should not overlook some of the computer football games which have been covered previously in these pages. **XOR**'s *NFL Challenge* and vanilla version of the same basic game, *Pro Challenge*, are classics for statistical/strategy players. **Lance Haffner**'s *Three-In-One Football* is the best non-graphic football game available and the statistics are amazing. **Avalon Hill**'s *Super Bowl Sunday* and *Mac Pro Football* (the latter from the designers of *MSFL*) continue to be popular. Sports strategy gamers among Apple owners who can manage to find copies of Dan Bunten's *Computer Quarterback*, published by **SSI**, will not be disappointed, either. Amiga owners looking for a statistically-based strategy game will certainly want to consider *Head Coach*.

Action fans will not want to overlook **Gamestar**'s *GFL Championship Football* with its "Inside the Helmet" perspective. *4th & Inches* from **Accolade** continues to be popular with its overhead view of miniature players. **Melbourne House** continues to publish the fast-moving and beautifully animated *John Elway's Quarterback*. **Bethesda Softworks**, those wonderful folks who brought us *Wayne Gretzky Hockey*, initially published *Gridiron*, an Amiga and Atari ST game which emphasized the unfolding of plays as colored dots collided on the football field. It was one of the first football games to offer a true playmaking utility, however, and is still worth a look to those who love action.

In summary, "coaches" of computer teams have numerous options when it comes to selecting the right program for their "Electronic Gridiron." **CGW**

*On the R.I.D. card provided opposite page 4, please rate the following games (if you have played them) and articles (if you have read them) by using a letter grade scale (I.e. A to F). Just rate the games as if you were an educator. As with the world of education, the scale will translate to:*

*A= Excellent*

*B= Above Average*

*C= Average*

*D= Below Average*

*F= Failure*

*If you wish, you may assign pluses (+) or minuses (-) to your letter grade (i.e. B+, B-, C+, C-, etc.). As always, rate only those games that you have played.*

*Over the next three issues we will rerate all of the games on our current R.I.D. list and a number of other titles as well. Remember that thousands of gamers will be making buying decisions based on the results of these ratings, so help your fellow gamer out and let him know what is a worthy purchase and what is not.*

### Demographics

*(List the appropriate number)*

*1. What is your age ?*

- *1 = Under 14 years old*
- *2 = 14-17 years old*
- *3 = 18-20 years old*
- *4 = 21-30 years old*
- *5 = 31-35 years old*
- *6 = 36-40 years old*
- *7 = 41-50 years old*
- *8 = 51+ years old*

*2. What machine(s) do you play games on?*

*(List all numbers that apply. List the machine you use most often first, the others in decending order of use).*

- *1 = IBM, clones, Tandy*
- *2 = Amiga*
- *3 = Apple 8 bit*
- *4 = Apple IIgs*
- *5 = Atari ST*
- *6 = Atari 8 bit*
- *7 = C-64/128*
- *8 = Macintosh*
- *9 = Other (specify)*

*3. How much time do you typically spend playing computer games each week?*

- *1 = Less than 2 hours*
- *2 = 2-5 hours*
- *3 = 6-10 hours*
- *4 = 11-20 hours*
- *5 = 21-30 hours*
- *6 = 31+ hours*

*RID #63 Questions*

### Games

*4. Dungeon Master (FTL)*
*5. Sim City (Maxis)*
*6. F-19 Stealth Fighter (Microprose)*
*7. Curse of Azure Bonds (SSI)*
*8. Lords of Rising Sun (Cinemaware)*
*9. Red Storm Rising (Microprose)*
*10. Overrun (SSI)*
*11. Battlehawks 1942 (Lucasfilm)*
*12. Battles of Napoleon (SSI)*
*13. Neuromancer (Interplay)*
*14. Wasteland (Electronic Arts)*
*15. The Magic Candle (Mindcraft)*
*16. Populous (EA)*
*17. Red Lightning (SSI)*
*18. Universe 3 (Omnitrend)*
*19. Space Quest III (Sierra)*
*20. Pure Stat Football (Software Sim)*
*21. Manhunter 2: SF (Sierra)*
*22. The Kristal (Cinemaware)*
*23. Indiana Jones & Last Crusade The Graphic Adventure (Lucasfilm)*
*24. Omega (Origin)*
*25. John Madden Football (EA)*
*26. TV Sports Football (Cinemaware)*
*27. Storm Across Europe (SSI)*
*28. Gauntlet II (Mindscape)*
*29. Wibarm (Broderbund)*
*30. Arkanoid II (Taito)*
*31. Murder Club (Kyodai)*
*32. Star Saga 2 (Masterplay)*
*33. Speedball (Spotlight)*
*34. Sword of Aragon (SSI)*
*35. Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade The Action Game (Lucasfilm)*
*36. MSFL Pro League Football (Micro Sports)*
*37. Orb Wars (GEnie)*
*38. Cribbage King/Gin King (Software Toolworks)*
*39. Beyond the Black Hole (Software Toolworks)*
*40. Ancient Lands of Ys (Kyodai)*

### Articles

*41. Football Survey*
*42. Scorpion's Mail*
*43. The Kristal Review*
*44. Universe 3 Review*
*45. Manhunter 2 Review*
*46. QIX Review*
*47. Letters*
*48. Inside the Industry*
*49. Risk Review*
*50. Horse Racing Review*
*51. Speedball Review*
*52. Vulcan Review*
*53. Project Firestart Review*
*54. Editorial Page*

### Questions

*55. Are you likely to purchase one of the new 16-bit game machines with its higher power and potential for CD-ROM expansion? (Yes or No)*

*56. Would you like to see more prominence given to the names of computer game designers on computer game packages (similar to the treatment given to authors of books)? (Yes or No)*



*Circle Reader Service #59*




### Avengers of the Mutant World

Upon reading your review of *Scavengers of the Mutant World*, here is our response. Your first complaint concerned the players, their attributes, and pictures. *Scavengers* provides a set of twenty players with randomly-generated attributes in each "world". Each character's attributes are chosen so that no one character is either a complete wimp or a super-being. Such is the case with the people you might find around you on any given day. We felt that having the game generate a fair set of characters was more like "real life" and less time-consuming than having to "roll" for them—over and over again. It was a design decision and we stand behind it. And although each player is assigned to one of twenty pre-defined pictures, the user may elect to rearrange the pictures or even draw new ones using the [M]odify option from the Main Menu. Admittedly, the drawing program is crude, but it was not a high-priority part of the game.

The random-world generation routine was indeed an attempt at replayability, originally. During play-testing, however, it became apparent that it was more interesting to create a unique world for each user to play around in. Although the goal of the game would remain the same, the environment experienced during play would change. Besides, some people *like* exploring new territory.

One of your major complaints was that the strength of the "monsters" increased faster than the strength of the players. This was also a conscious design decision, forcing the user to use some finesse to win the game, rather than brute force. It does appear, however, that we were a tad overzealous in the amount of increase, so that has been scaled back a bit in the 1.1 version of the game.

Hacking at "everything that moves" is decidedly *not* the way to win the game. A good campaign requires planning and staging. It is not necessary to return the Party to Lau to pick up new members; disbanding a Party of four members requires only 18 keystrokes and can be done in *any* ruin. You may then form or re-form a Party from players in Lau or wherever else you have left them. Proper strategy involves sending out scouting Parties to map the area, then collection Parties to gather loot and transport it to a central location, perhaps Lau.

You also faulted Scavengers for not having a "Save" feature. Frankly, we think that a save-anywhere-anytime command is a gigantic crutch which any true game aficionado should not use. If there is no "risk" in doing something, there is no point in playing the game. Moreover, Scavengers *does* allow the user to QUit the game *anywhere*, at which point the user can copy the database to a backup file. The best-selling *Wizardry* games, for example, only allow saves after you've returned to a home base and few of the current crop of home video games allow any kind of "save" at all.

I would have to judge by your comments that you never completed a game. There are several problems which must be solved before you can complete your mission, but unless you caught on to the fact that killing everything in sight is not the way to play the game, you'd probably never find them.

Version 1.1 of Scavengers will be out soon. It will include fixes to bugs reported to us so far, as well as support for 16-color graphics for EGA and Tandy adapters. With a new strategy towards winning the game, you might find this new version more enjoyable.

Bruce Beaumont and Chris Stassen
co-authors of *Scavengers of the Mutant World*
Webster, TX

*Thanks for your perspective. We sure can't agree with your opinion on "Save Games", though. Convenience is part of the value of playing computer games.*

### Old Genres Never Die

What's this nonsense about the pure wargame being a fading genre? There must be, *at least*, a dozen due for release in the next six months—and they take a lot of time to play. Let's try to avoid creating self-fulfilling prophecies.

Howard W. Levine
Jersey City, NJ

*The declining sales figures for wargames are not omens conjured by CGW. There do seem to be seem bright stars on the horizon, however. SSG's latest IBM conversions (*Rommel *and* Decisive Battles of the American Civil War: Volume 2*), as well as SSI's* Red Lightning *(IBM, Amiga, and Atari ST) and an upcoming IBM conversion of* Battles of Napoleon, *look like they are going to do very well. Nevertheless, some very good wargames have had marginal sales during the early part of 1989.*

### Tandy Is Dandy

Although not a Tandy owner, I applaud your testing efforts to verify color capability. This is a true service to the gaming community and fits in well with your policy of reviewing *all* games, not just good ones. We need to know the "good, bad, and the ugly" to make our purchasing decisions. Your magazine makes a great contribution.

Bill Murray
Fairfax, VA

I game on a **Tandy 1000 EX**. I very much appreciate the Tandy color article. Hopefully, software publishers will see your article as evidence of the numbers of Tandy color folk out there and support the 16 color graphics even more. Such support is a *very* big factor in my *purchasing* decision. I hate CGA!

*The Magic Candle* does support 16-color!

Jeff Walter
San Jose, CA

*Since* The Magic Candle *did not claim to support 16-color, we took their word for it. Next time, we won't take anyone's word for it.*

### Deus Ex Word Processor

A question: What would have happened to Biff *[Ed: Author of the "Populous" review in CGW #62]* if he *hadn't* liked *Populous*? Would the deity have zapped him? Something nefarious about that line of thought . . . Another question: Who *wrote* the sneak preview of *Dragon Wars* (CGW #62)? Could that deity have . . . Naaaah!

Dennis Owens
Houston, TX

*Give a reviewer like Dennis the issue off and these are the kinds of epistemological questions he conceives. Biff is alive and well, playing with his wolves. Where an article has no authorial attribution, it is the work of CGW's editorial staff.*

### I Dream of GEnie

I spend mucho dinero on *Orb Wars*, an on-line multi-player game similar to *Sniper*. It is found on the GEnie network. I'd like to see a review published. Multi-player games are the thing of the future! Why not devote more than one page in the history of *CGW* to them?

Eric Penn
Belmont, CA

*Funny you should mention it!* CGW *has covered gaming by telecommunications for more than six years. We once had a regular column specifically on that subject. We ran an* Islands of Kesmai *review over three years ago and have a review of* Air Warrior *(another GEnie game) in the works. By the way, there was a news item about on-line games on page 11 of* CGW #63 *and we continue to try to be supportive of modem-to-modem gaming.*


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